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THE GENIUS OF ISRAEL

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A Reading of Hebrew Scriptures Prior to the Exile

BY
CARLETON NOYES

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TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE

THE Old Testament read consecutively is not at once easy to understand. Itself is not a single book, but an aggregate of many diverse books. Each of these in its turn is highly composite: side by side are ranged passages, deriving from widely separate epochs, but without evident distinction in the text. So, for example, the first chapter of Genesis was written some four hundred years later than the second; both hold a narrative of the Creation, but they are very different in content and point of view. Moreover, the conditions of life from which the Hebrew scriptures proceeded are strange to us; basic elements of the books, their background, their allusions, are obscure. The world of the ancient East, in which Israel moved, is far less than the world of Greece and Rome a part of our inherited culture and familiar knowledge.

In the following pages I have tried to re-create the people and the civilization of which large portions of the Old Testament are the fragmentary but immensely engaging record. Israel, as a nation among nations, reached its term with the Exile in 586 B.C. After fifty years of captivity in Babylon, the people returning to Jerusalem founded the Jewish church: the Israelite kingdom gave place to the theocracy of Judaism. It was in the centuries before the Exile that the character of Israel received its special mould. As the power and the beauty of the Hebrew scriptures have their source deep in the racial temper of the people, it has seemed possibly rewarding to attempt, with broken and fugitive threads drawn from the complex fabric of the scriptures, to weave a pattern of the conditions and the events that gave peculiar form and impress to the genius of early Israel.

PREFACE

An interpretation rather than a history, this book aims to portray the Israelites as they were in the flesh, at work and at play, in the actual circumstances of their everyday experience, and in their relations with contemporary nations. The genius of Israel was supremely a genius for religion. But beneath the passion for God and his righteousness beat the urge of human striving for the merely human goods of life. If it was granted this people to mount the heights, the path thither led along the ways of men.

Neighbored by Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, the Israelites were a small people in a great world. Their gains in conquest and competence of statecraft alike were secondary; equally meagre were their material accomplishment and skill in the plastic arts. To show the littleness of Israel, however, is to accentuate the magnitude of its real achievement. Lighting a candle does not illuminate the sun. Rather, a vast darkness, which the sun floods with sudden glory, reveals the true marvel of its splendor.

My indebtedness to the labors of many scholars will be amply manifest; perhaps I need not specify in detail. Yet in a field where experts are so little in accord, I cannot hope to have avoided errors both of direct statement and of inference. Certainty of fact here seems impossible to attain; and notably for the earlier periods, new archeological discoveries may any day compel changes in currently accepted views. In general, however, I have simply tried to catch the spirit of things, as they moulded and expressed Israel's genius. My desire has been less to affirm or certify than to evoke. Whatever the success of my effort to make the Israelites live again with the warmth and presentness of timeless reality, I should like to contribute to a fuller understanding and richer appreciation of the Old Testament.

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use the text of the English Revised Version; in a few instances I have varied a word or phrase. To Mr. Carl Engel, of Washington, D.C., I am heartily grateful for his friendly and stimulating interest in my book while it was in process. Mr. Willard C. Jackson, of Cambridge, has kindly assisted me with the proofs. I owe an especial debt of gratitude to Robert H. Pfeiffer, Ph.D., Instructor in Semitic Languages in Harvard University, who has given me unsparingly of his knowledge and his time in many difficult places. With trenchant helpful criticism he has read the book in manuscript, and in proof keen-sightedly; and he has generously prepared the Indexes.

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THE GENIUS OF ISRAEL

I

BEFORE DAWN

When Egypt was at the height of its immemorial glory, and the Empire of Babylonia, after increasing centuries of splendor and dominion, had yielded to the attack of mountaineers out of the farther east, some rude nomad tribes, emerging from the Arabian desert, with time and by unknown ways moved toward the kindlier fields of Canaan.

A small amazing land of contrasts, of forbidding slopes and level invitation, Canaan lay across the caravan tracks that skirted the desert on the road from Babylonia to Egypt. Tenanted by a shepherd and farmer people, it was but a meeting-point of the two great empires — debatable ground to bring them together in conflict, or a buffer to keep them apart. While up and down its narrow length surged and ebbed the tides of world-ambitious conquest, itself not a nation but a territory, Canaan owned the suzerainty of one mighty state and then another, until at last the shepherd Hebrews, wandering children of a later day, entered in to possess it.

Between the affluent green valley of the Nile and the garden plains of Euphrates and Tigris, are strewn in vast distances the brown sands and desolate impenetrable steppes of the Arabian desert, at far intervals watered by oases. The wastes bear men abundantly, but cannot nourish them in the same measure. After the lapse of a millennium, within which period is fulfilled a secular climatic alternation of moisture and aridity, the oases are no longer able to support their burden. And the nomad herdsmen swarm forth, as though with

concerted action, in an immense migration, east and north and west, seeking sustenance and eager to reap where they have not sown.

So it happened that, about the middle of the fourth millennium before Christ, the desert pushed forth over its bounds a multitude of wandering tribes. Some made their way eastward to the Euphrates valley, and there establishing themselves, they absorbed a civilization won by another race. Other tribes, perhaps, found grazing for their flocks on the banks of the Nile, and mingling with peoples already there, helped to form the stock of the dynastic Egyptians. Still others were carried into Canaan; usurping its wells and fertile lands, they passed from nomadic to settled agricultural life.

In another thousand years, about 2500 B.C., a wave of shifting tribes flowed out of the desert, breaking in upon Syria and Canaan to the north and west, or pouring eastward into Mesopotamia and thence into Babylonia. In this movement came those tribes who possessed themselves of the seaboard, built Sidon and Tyre, and created the maritime power of the Phœnicians. Of the wanderers who reached the Euphrates valley, some settled in the city of Babylon, which now, though tradition ascribes its founding to Sargon I centuries before, rises to political importance. The dynasty established by these newcomers, preëminent among them the illustrious Hammurabi, made Babylon the ruling city of the Empire. Following this "Amoritic" migration, the next immense movement out of the desert, the "Aramean," about 1500 B.C., brought the Hebrews into the light of historic cognizance, as they pressed against the gates of the land upon which they were to set their unique and enduring seal.

In the far childhood of a race, time is long and change comes slowly. The reaches of history in its beginnings tell off centuries where later ages count by years. So it was that only with the passing

of unnumbered generations, a certain few tribes of many issuing from the ancestral desert came to recognize among themselves a closer kinship and more definite bond. Again a lapse of centuries before these tribes combined to form a people and woke to the consciousness of nationality. It was yet another hundred years and more, when Israel had chosen a king to rule over it, that lettered men began to record their people's history.

The Hebrew tribes won a home in Canaan after long wanderings and manifold vicissitudes. Of ancestral fortunes the remembrance lived in tribal songs and legends transmitted from generation to generation. Woven into the narratives compiled centuries afterwards, these precious survivals furnished substance for such history of patriarchal adventure as the writers could command. At best they but hint vague possibilities. One account, formulated by priestly writers after the Exile, sweeps back two thousand years to bring Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees; according to this interpretation, the remote ancestors of the tribes that became the nation Israel drifted from the desert eastward to the Euphrates valley as part of the Amoritic migration. The earliest narratives, however, written in Judah during or soon after the reign of Solomon, place the first home of the Hebrews in northern Mesopotamia, or Aram. These traditions, therefore, agree better with the probable fact, for it is reasonably certain that the Hebrews came in force with the Aramean migration. In the Judahite stories, the land of Abram's nativity is Haran, in northwestern Mesopotamia. There too, in the house of his brother Nahor, the patriarch finds a wife for his son Isaac. To the "land of the children of the East" Jacob flees from Esau's vengeance; he enters the service of his uncle Laban, in Haran, and takes Laban's two daughters to wife. So, also, later Israelites were taught to say, "A wandering Aramean was my father."

If indeed they touched along their way these ancient centres of civilization, whether in Babylonia or in Aram, the tribes from which were sprung the ancestors of Israel were nurtured in the desert before memory began. Here was wrought a racial fibre which distinguished Israel to the end; and the people never quite lost the recollection of its desert origin. To the eldest sons of the patriarchal family, to Ishmael, first born of Abraham, and to Esau, older brother of Jacob, tradition assigned the part of nomads. In a later age, the narratives of Israel's beginnings reflect, though waveringly, the distant past in something of its true image, not by force of cunning fancy or conscious literary skill, but because the influences of primal conditions persisted in communal memory and were still active in Israel's manner of life. Thus the nomad tribal system, extended to the comprehensive structure of the state, determined the nation's social and political organization. Every family, clan, and tribe, even when merged to constitute one people, kept the sense of itself as a distinct unit. The national God was the God of the tribes, but now accorded a larger sovereignty, for his development concurred with the widening interests of his worshippers. Moreover, the specific personal quality of Israel owed much to its inheritance of the desert, which illumines though it cannot wholly explain the peculiar genius of this people. The racial temper, of which Israel's later achievements were in part the expression, was forged through measureless time in the formative period of youth by the struggle for bare subsistence in the waste spaces of unfriendly earth. The nomad character is Israel's character in the making. For the desert, niggard, harsh, and inaccessible except to its own sons, does not change; and in the isolation imposed by environment, but accepted by the loyal tribesman as his primary obligation to his group, the strain of race continues pure. So in the nomad Arabs of to-day live again the ancestral Hebrews.

The basic social unit in the desert is the tribe, a group varying in numbers, of families bound together by a real or supposed community of blood, and tracing their descent from a common ancestor. So, tradition ran, the whole family of Israel were born of Jacob. Tribes originally distinct may unite, if the accidents or exigencies of desert life compel, in a bond of brotherhood, as happened actually with the tribes who became the "children of Israel"; or a tribe may subdivide, as Lot is represented to have separated from Abraham because the land could not sustain them together. Families and clans unite in a single distinct group by stern necessity, to assure their very existence; for all other tribes are active enemies if they are not acknowledged friends. Ishmael, ancient exemplar of the Bedawy, is a "wild ass of a man," whose home is the wilderness and the salt land his dwelling; his hand is against every man and every man's hand against him. The security of the individual lies wholly in his constant adherence to his group; cut off from his tribe, he is deprived of all protection. So Yahweh compassionately sets his mark upon the outlaw Cain to safeguard him, lest any finding him should kill him. Over and around this practical necessity, the children of the wastes weave the conception of the bond of blood as the cohesive force, giving it an ideal interpretation. Into the community sprung from the one ancestor, strangers may be received by adoption and by participating in blood-rites. By the same token, based in the same concept, the exaction of blood-revenge is the supreme coercion. "At the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The ordinance of Yahweh but echoes ineluctable desert custom. Because of the reality to the nomads of the blood-bond and its efficacy in practice, it was easy for Israel, long after the tribes had been welded into a nation, to maintain itself consciously as a people

apart, seemingly chosen from the beginning to the fulfilment of a special destiny.

As all social unity is thus rooted in kinship, so every social obligation derives directly from it. By nature arrogant and uncontrollable, yet the nomad willingly subordinates his personal concerns to the welfare of the group, for his adherence is not the surrender of his liberty, but rather its guarantee. Toward strangers, because of his unbounded pride of race and family, he is the haughtiest of aristocrats. But within the tribe prevails the spirit of equality. As all members share alike the common tasks in work and war, all enjoy the same importance. This sense of the perfect equality of all within the group the Hebrews carried with them from the desert into Canaan, and it survived long in Israel. To their innate conviction of the absolute dignity and worth of the individual was perhaps due the fact that the Israelites were never subjected to a despotism, such as ruled Egypt and the empires of the Euphrates-Tigris valley. At one period of its history only, Israel approached the sovereignty exercised by its great and ancient neighbors west and east. David laid the foundations of a despotism. Solomon, worldly, ambitious, and loving splendor, strove with the resources which his father had made possible to play the rôle of magnificent potentate. When the government passed to a weak and unwise son, the momentum was lost; and the kingdom fell apart. Israel and Judah, divided against themselves, reverted to a humbler station.

The chieftain of the tribe is the sheikh, chosen by his fellows for his eminence and fitness. There is no right of primogeniture; the sheikh's successor, though usually one of his sons or other member of his family, is elected as being the most capable. More than once Israel availed itself of desert practice in the choosing of its king. Leader in war, yet in everyday affairs the sheikh is rather counsellor than auto-

crat. As judge, the tribesmen submit to his decrees, though he is without power to enforce them. The execution of justice rests with the group. The will of the tribe is the supreme law; custom is the ultimate authority. "It is not wont so to be done." Tribal public opinion finds voice in sentences of praise or blame, perhaps moulded to rhythmic form and given currency. So Deborah celebrates the governors in Israel who offered themselves willingly to war against Sisera, and she taunts the laggard clans that came not to the help of Yahweh against the mighty. As but the prime representative of all his fellows, the sheikh wields an influence only commensurate with his wealth, the magnitude of his family, and his own personal qualities.

It was centuries in Israel before the sheikh was transformed into a king. Moses, Joshua, the "Judges," and the first king Saul bore the character of tribal leader. Of the Bedawy chieftain in his original setting, with a touch of swagger in his dignity, Hebrew legend has preserved a precious image. Lamech, flushed with triumph, comparing himself to his own advantage with a rival chieftain eminent for his fierceness, declaims expansively before his admiring womenfolk:

> Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
> Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:
> For I have slain a man for wounding me,
> And a young man for bruising me:
> If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
> Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

The sheikh in gentler aspect is figured in Abraham. He is rich in flocks and herds, and has many servants. Honorable and generous when dealing with his nephew Lot, he is crafty when opposed to strangers: the guile of a half-truth, accepted in good faith by the Pharaoh and by Abimelech, brings him successfully out of his difficulties — to the manifest satisfaction of the narrator! He is the perfection of courtesy in paying sheikhly homage to his guests. The

nomad is superb in the part of host, fulfilling the eternally sacred obligation of hospitality. One of the most charming sketches wrought into the Israelite narratives is the picture of the amiable sheikh, suddenly overtaken in the leisure of the daily round by the arrival of unexpected visitors, and busying himself without loss of dignity to do the honors of the occasion.

And Yahweh appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on: forasmuch as ye are come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto the servant; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

The part played by Sarah in this scene and in the narrative following implies that the women of the desert are allowed a certain relative independence. The duty of the men is to fight and assure the maintenance of the tribe; the petty drudgery of the camp falls to the women. They prepare the meals, fetch water for the tent, and water the flocks. Abraham's servant, sent to find a wife for Isaac, meets Rebekah coming out at evening to draw at the well. Rachel tends her father's sheep; at the well where she goes to water them, Jacob has his first sight of her. So Moses, too, fleeing to Midian, meets Zipporah among the seven daughters of Reuel, when they come to the

well and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. In primitive conditions, where daily necessities call to varied occupations outside the tent as within it, women are permitted a greater freedom of movement than in the more centred life of towns. Although they are held to be the property of the father or the husband, yet within the tribe, as among kindred, they are not guarded with the jealous watchfulness which in the East a more complex society demands. Rebekah is portrayed as a woman of individuality and resourcefulness. While she is yet a girl, her opinion is sought by her elders regarding a choice of husband; not until she comes into the presence of her betrothed does she assume a veil. She goes, presumably alone and of her own initiative, to consult the oracle of Yahweh concerning her expected child. She shows herself cleverer than her husband, devises an elaborate stratagem, and outwits him to the advantage of her favorite son. In Hagar, the Arabian handmaid of Sarah, and in Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, the woman of the primeval desert survives immortally.

The stories of Hagar, in Genesis 16, and of Jael, in Judges 5, are woven of the oldest strands of Hebrew legend. With the sharp brevity of ancient story-telling craft, Hagar is pictured as a proud-spirited Bedawy woman, who, though chance has made her a slave, is no less absolute than her impetuous mistress. When the fortune of tribal life turns in her favor and she is about to bear a son to Abraham, she does not hesitate to assert herself, as she thus wins advantage over the childless wife. Rather than suffer ill-treatment at Sarah's hand, she flees to her native wilderness; there at a spring she meets a god who utters a prophetic sentence upon the son that is to be. The fateful words, spoken in poetic measure, are tense with the unbridled spirit of the wastes. Hagar recognizes the deity of the spring — whom the compilers of Israel's traditions transformed into Yahweh — and she calls the god by name, *El roi.*

A significant contrast to this early legend is the parallel account in Genesis 21, which took shape much later, and reflects the point of view of a people no longer at home in the desert. Here the emphasis, as suits the sensibility which civilization develops, falls upon the wretchedness of Hagar's lot in being cast out into the desert, a vague region of danger and deprivation. The high-mettled Bedawy woman becomes here the unfortunate rejected slave-mother, doomed to see her son perish in the wilderness. The pride of the old legend in the defiant spirit of the desert strain yields to a tenderer mood of pity. The narrative has kept true, however, some traits of family life of the ancient nomad tribe. Abraham makes a great feast on the day that Isaac is weaned. The mother, seeing the son of the slave-woman at play, becomes jealous for the future of her own child. In his perplexity, Abraham is admonished of God as to adjusting the contention between the rival mothers.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and gave her the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. And the water in the skin was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not look upon the death of the child. . . . And God heard the voice of the lad. . . . And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he dwelt in the wilderness, and became a bowman.

The story of Jael likewise is preserved in parallel accounts, in the ancient Song of Deborah, and in the prose narrative of the fourth chapter of Judges. The poem, the older and contemporary version of the episode, is more vivid; the prose account more explicit: the character depicted in both is the same. Jael is a figure out of Israel's he-

roic age. To the hardening influences of her desert training she owes the power of resolution that nerves her to her terrible deed. Eternal watchfulness against sudden danger has made her quick to think and to act. The most sacred, most imperative law of the desert does not bind her toward an enemy. She triumphs by a union of guile and force. Feigning courtesy, she bids the fleeing Sisera to find asylum and rest in her tent. True to the law of hospitality which she is about to violate supremely, she gives him milk to drink, and covers him with a rug. With practised hand, for pegging the tent is woman's business, and with taut sinews, she grasps the hammer and the tent-pin.

And she went softly unto him, and smote the pin into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground; for he was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died. And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And he came unto her; and, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the tent-pin was in his temples.

Of such fibre was Israel fashioned in the beginning.

The ancient desert temper was slow to yield to the relaxing influences which awaited Israel in Canaan. Few peoples have kept their racial character intact throughout millennia, as have the Arabs, or so little modified by stress and dispersion as have the Jews. For all the conditions of life in the wastes make for extreme conservatism. Tenacious of old custom by nature, the nomad finds little occasion for change in manner of life or habits of thought. Tribes which are thrust forward to the edges of the desert submit in a measure to the assimilating forces that reach them from civilization. But the transition from nomadic to settled life is passive, with intermediate stages. It is with these semi-nomads of the border that the Israelites were more familiar, in tradition and in actual intercourse. Ishmael and

Esau were true Bedawin. But the direct ancestors of the people, Abraham and Isaac, were conceived as semi-nomads, dwelling in tents, driving their flocks, yet touching points of settled habitation. They have not lost their desert character, but they are passing over into new ways of life.

Within the desert itself, human contacts are few. And even then, like meets like only to repel it. There are no differences of level, none of the resultant impulses when one social order rushes upon another, to overwhelm or to be absorbed. Life is in monotone. Development must be from within, and is of necessity slow, if it comes at all. Having so few of material goods, the desert dwellers are not forced to exercise — save in the limitless domain of imagination — whatever of creative or inventive faculty nature may have wrought into their fibre. Their sole wealth is in their flocks; and the simple occupation of tending them suffices to supply their needs. Israel had no art except the art of poetry and of story-telling; in the lesser crafts, the nation borrowed of its neighbors. But the very narrowness of range in external interests results in the intensification of innate qualities. The Arabs are what they are, to the highest degree.

The life of these shepherds, however, is not a pastoral, such as classic poets have celebrated, an idyl of some far-off golden age. Mother of multitudes, the desert is a stern nurse. Withholding all but a scant allowance of pasturage and water over wide distances, she condemns her sons to a life of wandering and war. According to the season, they move from oasis to oasis with a kind of cosmic regularity of ebb and flow; until with the lapse of long periods, the increasing pressure of tribes from the interior of the desert forces those on the edges over into the fertile lands already won for civilization: and there follows a great migration such as brought the Hebrews into history. Apart from their wealth in flocks, the right to water is the

nomads' only property, guarded most jealously. Tribes are ever exposed to the attack of marauding rivals, who sweep suddenly out of the horizon to plunder the encampment. Dispute for the possession of oases is a frequent occasion of conflict. There was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and of Lot. Again, Abraham reproved Abimelech of Gerar because of the well of water which the king's servants had violently taken away; and he prevailed upon Abimelech to receive from his hand seven ewe lambs as witness that Abraham had dug the well. Woven into the narratives of Israel's forty years' wanderings in the wilderness as a leading motive is the constant quest for water. The vital necessity of it serves to invest all springs and wells with a powerful imaginative and religious significance. They are the abode of deity, to be approached only with due ceremony. One of the oldest bits of Hebrew poetry is the song, in the spirit of magical incantation, at once solemn and exulting, which accompanies the labor of digging a well, and greets the bursting forth of the water from its hiding in the sands.

> Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:
> The well, which the princes digged,
> Which the nobles of the people delved,
> With the sceptre, and with their staves.

Similar songs are current among Arabs to-day. To wanderers out of the parched desert, Canaan seemed indeed "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills." Water is the great fructifying principle in nature; out of its rare preciousness and divine beneficence Hebrew literature has wrought some of its most beautiful and appealing imagery.

In this life of physical deprivation there are ameliorations. The labor needful for the Arab's starveling subsistence is not hard; and the intervals of tending flocks and of the drift from oasis to oasis,

even with its risks of petty war, afford abundant leisure. Around the camp-fire in the evening, the men gather to listen to song and recitation; children squat among their elders; and the women are ranged discreetly in the background. All give heed with eager expectancy, as one or another recounts in verse or prose the traditions of the clan, telling of great deeds of tribal heroes or making mock of enemies. Of antique happenings the various clans have different versions, each clan ascribing the particular achievements to their own ancestors. The scene is enacted every evening. And who knows for how many centuries into the unrecorded past? Here was the cradle of Israel's legends of old time.

So Israel came naturally by its sovereign art of narrative. Among the Arabs are professional reciters, who invest their occupation with the dignity of a guild, holding themselves true to its traditions and its craft. If the stories in their pack are popular in origin, character, and appeal, yet, through repeated manipulation by skilled practitioners, they take on the form of art. Doubtless also among the nomad Hebrews and the Israelites after their settlement in Canaan were similar entertainers of the clan. In the Hebrew scriptures, many of the stories woven into the continuous narrative of the large Books were originally oral legends. Though recorded when the practice of writing was new to Israel, they are not the first tentative effort of an art in its beginnings; rather they represent the end of a long development. In their present setting they have suffered mutilation in the process of adaptation by successive editors. Disengaged from the confusions of their immediate context and seen thus in their pristine completeness, they are of wonderful simplicity and clarity. Told and retold through generations by skilled reciters in the hearing of expert listeners, they have reached a satisfying finality of form.

In the range and romance of the Arabs' imaginative utterance is expressed their intensity of nature. The vast simplicity of the desert has moulded the character of the race in sharpest definition; but that character is by no means simple. The nomad combines many contradictory traits. The meagreness of his fare fosters austerity, at the same time that he is passionate and sensual. Though he has hardly enough for his own needs and nothing to spare, there is a touch of ostentation in his lavish generosity toward the guest whom the chance of the desert may have brought to his tent. The material conditions of his environment urge him to constant restlessness, but provide him no object; and he is forced to a long patience. What he lacks in physical strength he supplies by guile — a trait which finds a brilliant exemplar in the patriarch Jacob. The Arab's code of honor is a savage one, knife-edged and pitiless, but he observes it with inflexible punctiliousness. Outside the code, against enemies or dealing with strangers beyond the clan, he knows no scruple. Of "quick metal," he is swayed by a hot intensity of feeling, which in religion becomes fanaticism. The prophets of Israel were true to type.

In his reaction to the world about him, the nomad is concrete and immediate; he has little power of abstraction or reflection. His imagination is stimulated by the great vacancies of earth, and he animates the void with multiple and ominous life. Mysterious voices which resound in solitudes and empty places, though but the rustling of the sands or the hiss of winds, betray the movement of supernatural malevolent beings. Wild creatures of the desert, hostile to men, all creeping things and hairy monsters and obscene birds, are "jinn" or demons, to be terribly feared and, if possible, eluded. Everywhere danger lurks, vague, unintelligible, ready to strike. There, just beyond, terror impends. The immense susceptibility of the primitive Semites to dread and awe may be an element in that "sense of sin" which the

prophets of Israel evoked and the psalmists voiced supremely, an aptitude which finds its nearest parallel among the kindred Babylonians in their penitential psalms. The belief in demons persisted actively in Babylonia throughout its history and figured powerfully in the daily life of the people. In Israel it was conquered, though not wholly eradicated, by the religion of Yahweh; and it may be traced in the Hebrew writings as the echo of a past that has been outlived. Thus, as a single instance, the serpent in Eden was originally a demon, derived from Babylonia, but transformed by Israel. The loneliness of the desert sharpens the nomad's perception of the pregnant emptiness around him. In his isolation from human contacts, he is made aware of the great drama of natural forces which may threaten or befriend. Out of such beginnings in the primeval past was sprung the imagination which achieved the sublimities of the Book of Job, as the flower is akin to the root.

The fear of hostile mysterious beings is countervailed by the worship of the known and kindly powers of nature. For light on his journeyings, the nomad looks to the stars and the waxing and waning moon. The heat of noonday brings the period of rest; and in the burning wastes of sand where no green thing is, the sun is not a friend. The gods of the night skies, therefore, composed his pantheon. The phases of the moon determined the Israelite calendar; and as late as the reign of Josiah, the prophets Zephaniah and Jeremiah combatted the people's worship of the "host of heaven," at that time borrowed from Assyria. But gods are upon earth as well. Springs and trees, rare in the desert, but so much the more beneficent, and even rocks — a shadow in a weary land — are holy because the dwelling-place of a god, or perhaps his visible presence. So El roi appeared to Hagar at the spring in the wilderness. Yahweh revealed himself to Abraham in the terebinth of Moreh. Jacob in his flight into the East is

overtaken by the night; he goes to sleep with a stone under his head, and dreams marvellously.

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Yahweh is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

In this ceremony Jacob offers a libation to the deity resident in the stone, who had vouchsafed the portentous dream. That these traces of early Semitic belief and ritual have been preserved is due to the fact that the compilers of the narratives have transformed the original local numen of spring or tree or stone into Yahweh, and they impute to the ancestors the orthodox practices of the Mosaic religion. But for the appreciation of the genius of Israel in its gradual development, these survivals of old custom take on new meanings when seen in their primal significance.

In the desert Israel's genius received a temper which later experiences were to fashion anew, but could not wholly transmute. The group of tribes that afterwards constituted the people of Yahweh underwent external modifications as they moved from one condition through many vicissitudes to another land and different way of life. Some of the tribes, at least, endured bondage in Egypt; and after their deliverance, they wandered again in the wilderness. Prolonged uncertain struggles still confronted them, before they won the promised land and established their kingdom. But the desert training in their racial youth created the stuff with which later conditions were to work; influences which awaited them in the secular process of their development had always to reckon with this primary material.

So the Bedawy character illustrates the qualities of early Israel, for good or bad, as they were embodied in its heroes. Tenacity, enthusiasm, craft and savage cruelty, an immense capacity for suffering, a patience that would not yield, a vision of blessing only in some future, were Israel's inheritance of the desert.

II

OUT OF THE DESERT

BETWEEN the emergence of the Hebrew tribes, by whatever devious ways, from their native desert, and the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan as masters of the country, intervened several centuries. Some of the tribes reached the border of Egypt; thence another generation returned through the wilderness south of Canaan, and at length from the territory east of the Jordan their sons moved to the gradual conquest of the promised land. From the sojourn in Egypt, backward, a vague span of time recedes into an obscurity but just yielding to the deceptive lights of earliest dawn. Of this period, indeed, Israel had traditions, which later writers fashioned into continuous narratives, relating with great picturesque charm the personal adventures and wayfarings of Israel's immediate ancestors. Risen spontaneously within various groups or tribes, and passing orally from generation to generation, the legends of the patriarchs, as fixed in written form, are the issue of a long and complex process. Though accepted as realities in their own living day, they are now but shadows in a twilight beyond discerning; and the substance of fact which they seem to body forth can only be divined.

Diverse in origin, woven of strands gathered afar, the narratives of Israel's beginnings lend themselves to different interpretations. Some readers of the Book of Genesis see in the legends a faithful portrait of historical characters, and a literal and exact record of events. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons; Ishmael, Laban, Lot, Esau; Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel; and all the rest of the engaging dramatic figures that throng its pages, were real persons. And

the stories told of them are the account of actual happenings, unerringly transmitted through the centuries. Others regard these traditional ancestors of the Israelites and their kindred as "eponymous heroes": the individual is the personification and representative of races and peoples and tribes and families. The incidents attaching to them are the free creation of the legend-making imagination, yet with a kernel of historic fact; the fortunes of individuals, therefore, may symbolize in a general way large tribal movements and experiences. Still others go farther back in time and find the origins of Israel's progenitors in the personages of antique mythology. Gods of greater or lesser rank, touching earth, become local "heroes," each with his appropriate legend; in turn heroes, brought closer to the people, are transformed into ancestors: until finally the whole sheaf of myth and legend, garnered from the entire field of Semitic life, springing out of Arabia and extending through Babylonia, Aram, and Canaan, inures to the sons of Israel.

To apprehend Israel's genius, it is not necessary to decide for one of these interpretations as against all others. Probably no one hypothesis is wholly true; possibly all of them are partly true. Manifestly the figures of Israel's early narratives to the beginning of authentic history are not all on the same plane. Abraham is the personal name of an individual; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah are the names of tribes. Jacob was undoubtedly a local hero; Israel, with whom Jacob was afterward identified, was a construction of the genealogical system. Noah the husbandman, who discovered the vine and fell a victim to his invention, is not the same as the God-fearing worthy who by virtue of his piety was instrumental in preserving the race of men. Isaac may be wholly legendary; Moses was certainly historical. Perhaps the truth lies in the just combination of the right elements out of all interpretations — if only it could be attained!

According to their own reading of their history, the family of Israel were sprung in direct descent from the one ancestor Abraham. The groups which later made up the nation constituted a unity from the first. Though they were at times divided by the hazards of the conquest of Canaan which followed upon the deliverance from Egypt and the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, yet the bond of brotherhood was never utterly loosed, and the tribes were finally reunited under the monarchy. Their rise and their present community of interest were foreordained. The sons of Israel were Yahweh's peculiar people, chosen and guided to a special destiny.

The narratives which thus coerce the multiform ancient traditions into a seeming unity were composed after the establishment of the kingdom. Embodying material long current and beloved among the people, yet they were themselves erudite rather than popular. From the vantage-point of the monarchy secure in the mastery of Canaan, it was possible to survey the development of Israel as an entirety and to see in it the working of a single principle. The authors of the older narratives, the Judahite and the Ephraimite, were animated compulsively by zeal for Israel's religion. Their conscious informing purpose, so different from the upwelling play of men's imaginings free in time and place, was to show forth the regnant loving-kindness of Yahweh in the guidance of his people as personified in their traditional ancestors. So in the stories of the patriarchal exploits, their course is ascribed to the active ever-present intervention of Yahweh. At his behest, Abraham left home and kindred to set out for a new country; the stages of his journey were signalized by renewed promises and blessings; and his principal act at each station of his wanderings was to build an altar to Yahweh and worship there. Jacob's unfailing success was due less to his own consummate craft than to Yahweh's overruling favor.

The design of the narrators was carried out with such singleness of eye and mind as intentionally to exclude everything that could not be brought to bear on their high purpose. Of the great mass of legend current throughout the Semitic world were preserved only the stories that could be turned to the service of Israelite national history in its relation to the national worship. Even of material distinctively Hebrew, what is lost probably far exceeded what has survived; for doubtless traditions that were merely popular and incapable of receiving religious import were rejected. Yet in fragments genuinely ancient the old fibre persisted, the original coloring was not wholly overlaid. From faint traces left by the passing of the primal day, unassimilated to the main design or not quite transformed in the process of editing, it may be possible, with tentative help from Egyptian and Canaanite records, to form an approximate though vague conception of events which out of certain Hebrew tribes fashioned the people of Israel.

About the middle of the second millennium before Christ, many nomad tribes, separately or in companies, pushed forth from the Arabian desert in a general migration. In different regions and at different periods, groups of these tribes united to possess a territory and to constitute a people. Some moved north and west by way of Aram; others came up from the south toward Canaan. Among them all, the latest to consolidate were the Israelites. By what accident or design just these special few tribes, distinct from the rest, were welded into a closer union as the sons of Jacob-Israel is not known. Along their borders were other peoples, swept forward in the same great movement, with whom they recognized a certain original kinship, which they represented in their historical narratives in terms of a genealogical system. Esau-Edom was the elder brother of Jacob, from whom Jacob cunningly won the birthright. Moab and Ammon were sons of

Abraham's nephew Lot. The link extended even into the desert, for Ishmael was the son of Abraham by his wife's handmaid; and other desert tribes were sprung from Abraham's concubine Keturah. Out of this larger Hebrew group, the tribes which came together as "Israel" had in common the worship of Yahweh. This was the very essence of their union. At what moment in their progress they relinquished their desert religion to acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Sinai is uncertain. In the oldest narrative, written in Judah, the patriarchs are conceived as worshipping Yahweh from the beginning. In the narrative composed in the northern kingdom about a century later, and also in the Priestly version written after the Exile, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, though then unknown by his name, was none other than he who revealed himself as Yahweh to Moses in the land of Midian, at Mount Horeb or Sinai. The precise fact cannot be determined. What other motives or occasions there may have been for the amalgamation of the tribes who became the Israelite nation remain obscure. The process was gradual, and was not completed till long after their final settlement in Canaan.

According to its own traditions, the nation was originally constituted of twelve tribes, descended from the twelve sons of Israel. The number was the creation of the genealogical scheme. The same system was applied to Ishmael, to Edom, and to other peoples. In practice there were twelve tribes in Israel only by an arbitrary reckoning. There was not just this number of tribes actually in existence at any given moment; and the various nominal enumerations of them by the several narrators are not mutually consistent.

One element in the tribal beginnings of Israel that all the narratives in common emphasize had a basis in fact. The distinction between the northern tribes, which were afterwards known as Israel or Ephraim, coming from Aram, and the southern tribes, under the later

leadership of Judah, from the wilderness south of Canaan, represented a real difference. After the division of the kingdom, which ensued upon the death of Solomon, the two groups were set over against each other in rivalry, often in militant hostility, and each went its separate way. Israel and Judah were henceforth two nations, rather than one people; and each followed its own course of development to its own end. Throughout their history, the contrast between north and south was fundamental, not only in topographical environment with its resultant influence upon events, but also in temper and culture. Judah, among its hills austere and intense, had the longer history; the life of Israel, passionate and luxurious in the broad fertile plains about Samaria, was more checkered and tumultuous. So, too, at the outset, before their union as the sons of Jacob, the two groups had fared along different ways. These differences are indicated in the stories of the several ancestors. Abraham is associated with the south, with Hebron and Beer-sheba; and he goes down into Egypt. In Egypt also Joseph comes to great honor; and thither his brothers follow him. But northward runs the adventurous course of Jacob. In Beth-el, in Shechem, and in Gilead east of the Jordan, divine favor attends the hero and turns the issue to his advantage. Seeking his fortune in distant Aram, he prospers famously; there he wins his wives and founds a family. The country of the northeast is the scene of his characteristic trials and triumphs. Although the ancestors are thus depicted as individuals, doubtless their doings echo the remembrance of tribal experience; and the legends reflect a dim image of the conditions which confronted the Hebrews as they were launched from the desert upon an unfamiliar land.

The stories of the patriarchs represent the ancestral tribes as already in contact with civilization. It is untold years since they emerged from the isolation of the desert, for Abraham is at home in

the city of Haran; and as semi-nomads, dwelling in tents and keeping flocks, they wander from place to place. Herein the tradition is true in spirit to real conditions. But the actual background is suggested, if at all, only with extreme vagueness. The attention of the narrators is fixed on the principal personages, thrown into such sharp relief that they seem to act *in vacuo*. Canaan, so far as concerns the legends, was an empty land. Cities were there, of course, and ancient sites, which received a new and special sanctity because Yahweh there revealed himself to the fathers. But for the most part the patriarchs were free to journey at will, unmolested and unafraid. It is only on occasion that they encounter the native inhabitants. Although Lot becomes a city dweller in Sodom and Isaac tills the soil in Gerar, there is no evidence in the narratives of Genesis that the earliest Hebrew tribes of whom history can take cognizance were in any wise modified by the old and highly developed culture of Canaan.

As semi-nomads, the newcomers have lost much of their primal warlike character. Abraham, a prosperous sheikh, seeks no quarrel with the people whose territory he touches in his wanderings; he is glad to compose all differences amicably. Reason, blended with just the right amount of guile, is better than force. In contrast to the gracious serenity of the pious Abraham, and probably closer to the fact, are violence and rapine enacted by Jacob's untamed sons. Simeon and Levi, treacherously though not without provocation, fall upon Shechem and put the inhabitants to the sword. Here two tribes seem to have united in a common enterprise; and the fact of their alliance was held in proverbial remembrance.

> Simeon and Levi are brethren;
> Weapons of violence are their swords.
> Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce;
> And their wrath, for it was cruel.

Finally their undertaking resulted disastrously. Not only did they fail to wrest from the Shechemites territory for themselves in which to settle: Simeon was forced back to the borders of the desert; and Levi as a tribe — for the identification of the priesthood with Levi was the work of a later period — disappeared entirely. They were divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel.

The story of Shechem mirrors other aspects of the Hebrews' entrance into Canaan. According to the legend, Jacob with his numerous family is encamped in neighboring territory. Shechem, son of Hamor, prince of the land, seeing Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, does her wrong. He offers to make reparation by however much dowry and gift, for he loves the damsel; and his father proposes that the Shechemites and the family of Jacob intermarry. "And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein." But the sons of Jacob answer them with guile. Then follow the treacherous onslaught of Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi, and the massacre of the Shechemites.

A possible interpretation of the story suggests what may well have been the conditions of the Hebrews' first contact with the Canaanites. Instead of being permitted to move in peace throughout the land, as the patriarchal narratives in general imply, the semi-nomadic Hebrew tribes from the borders of the desert, singly or in groups, either were gradually absorbed by the native population of a district, as they settled there to dwell and trade and get possessions, or they came into armed conflict with them so that the one or the other were virtually destroyed. Thus the tribes who bore the names of the sons of Jacob's concubines and were therefore not of the true strain may have arisen out of the fusion of the newcomers with communities of settled Canaanites; or other tribes, like Simeon and Levi, failing to

conquer were lost to history. Such at least were the circumstances of the Israelites' later entrance and settlement in Canaan, after the exodus from Egypt.

Just here the question obtrudes as to whether there were two invasions of Canaan, respectively before and after the Egyptian episode, or only one. If there were two distinct invasions, and if the sojourn in Egypt was the lot of many Hebrew tribes, then the difference between their first contact with Canaan as represented in the stories of the ancestors and their later and historical conquest would seem to be that after the residence in Egypt the Israelite group was made up of a larger number of tribes than at first, acting now with a definite consciousness of their unity of interest and purpose. It may be, however, that the legends but reflect in shadowy symbol the events of the historic conquest. The dubious evidence lurking in Israel's records offers these alternatives: either the Hebrews penetrated Canaan before the Egyptian sojourn, leaving there in occupation some tribes that did not go to Egypt, and the early legends echo a true memory of their fortunes; or certain incidents of the actual conquest, which is recounted in detail and seeming fidelity in Numbers and Joshua, were carried back by the authors of Genesis to apply to the patriarchs. The two accounts of the Hebrew invasion then would be parallel and duplicate. A precise conclusion would seem to be impossible, were it not for precarious inferences that may be drawn from sources in Egypt and Canaan.

Whatever authentic material the Hebrew narratives supply in illustration of this earliest period of Israelite history is at the most fragmentary; and the result is chiefly negative. The obscurity is lighted, but not cleared, by flashes out of Egyptian and Canaanite records, though their import is uncertain. At Tell-el-Amarna in Middle

Egypt were discovered in 1887–88 a number of letters, written on clay tablets in the Babylonian script, and addressed to Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV, kings of Egypt, by the native princes of Canaan, dating from the fifteenth century before Christ. Among them are tablets despatched by Abd-khiba, ruler of Jerusalem, to the Pharaoh. The vassal complains to his Egyptian overlord of the inroads of "Khabiru"-folk; and he asks the Pharaoh to send troops to his aid, that he may defend himself against them. He writes: "The Khabiru are plundering all the lands of the King. . . . If there are no troops here, then the lands of my lord the King will be lost." Again he says that Milkilu and the sons of Labaja — evidently his enemies among other princes in Canaan — have given the land of the king to the Khabiru. The territories of Gazri, Ashkaluna, and Lakis have furnished them provisions, oil, and all necessaries. "The Khabiru are taking the cities of the King." "Labaja and the land Shakmi [Shechem] have given everything to the Khabiru." "The land of the King is fallen away" to them. So the enemies of the Pharaoh's officer in Jerusalem have made common cause with the invaders. The extent to which the newcomers have penetrated Canaan is indicated in the mention of Shechem in the north, Gezer in the centre, and Ashkelon and Lachish in the south. The report concerning Shechem is particularly striking in view of the Israelite story of Simeon and Levi.

In letters from local rulers farther north is much news regarding the movements and exploits of the "Sa-Gaz." The enmity of the Sa-Gaz warriors against Rib-addi, regent of Gubla, is become mighty. He asks the Pharaoh to send him fifty pairs of horses and two hundred foot-soldiers that he may be able to maintain himself in Shigata against Abd-ashirta, the dog! lest his enemy gather together all the Sa-Gaz and take the city. He complains further that all the lands will ally themselves with the marauders. Zimriddi, prince of Sidon, re-

ports that all the cities which the king had given into his hand have gone over to the Sa-Gaz. Abimilki of Tyre sends word that the king of Khasura has ranged himself with the invaders, and the land of the Pharaoh has fallen to them. Milkilu, already mentioned in a letter of Abd-khiba, writes: "May the King my lord save his land out of the hand of the Sa-gaz!" Another reports that thirteen Egyptians were wounded in a raid of the plunderers. And so the story runs through a numerous array of letters from the whole length of the Coastland.

The word SA-GAZ, written as an ideogram, has the meaning robber, free-booter. In the Amarna tablets generally, the Sa-Gaz play the same rôle as the Khabiru in Abd-khiba's letters from Jerusalem. The Khibiru, a people, therefore, were Sa-Gaz, a horde of plunderers. The word Khabiru is regarded as the cuneiform equivalent of the Hebrew word *'ibrim*, meaning Hebrews. If the two words are not equivalent phonetically, at least there seems to be no doubt that what was true historically of the Khabiru was equally true of the Hebrews — the large group of tribes, from a certain few of whom were descended the Israelites. Bands of invaders from the edges of the desert flowed in upon the cultivated land, troubling further the insecurity of cities and petty principalities menaced already to the point of extreme turmoil by rivalries and feuds among themselves. Warlike, and plundering as they went, they withdrew their attack when satisfied with booty; or perhaps, as the price of peace, they extorted from the possessors of the land a strip of territory on which to establish themselves and in time to merge with the settled population. Among these marauders, the high-souled Abraham, the gentle Isaac, and crafty Jacob are far to seek. But it is not too wild a fancy to descry in them the forerunners, if not the ancestors, of the militant tribes who in the hardihood of their youth overbore the resistance of an older culture and set their

own distinctive mark upon the land. The glimpses which the archives of Amarna thus disclose are fugitive and brief; in a swift moment of illumination they reveal the Hebrews on their way.

The memory of Israel's beginnings survived among the people in legend and romantic story. Authentic traces, however, of Israel's first contact with Canaan have been found in Egypt, though they are of the slightest, and the interpretation is doubtful. On the great temple at Karnak is inscribed a list of more than a hundred names of territories conquered by Thutmose III in his campaign against Syria about 1470 B.C. Among them occur the names, j-'-q-b-'-r and j-s-p-'-r. These are held to be the Egyptian equivalent of the Hebrew Jacob-el and Joseph-el. What this scanty evidence establishes is the fact that about the time of the Hebrews' invasion of Canaan, the names Jacob and Joseph were known in that country as applying to districts, or to groups identified with them. Similarly, in lists of the time of Seti I and of Ramses II, the "Pharaoh of the oppression," is mentioned a hill Aser, apparently in the territory afterward occupied by the tribe Asher. Finally, in a hymn of victory, celebrating the triumphs of King Merneptah (1225–1215 B.C.), the "Pharaoh of the Exodus," occur the lines:

> Canaan is seized with every evil;
> Ashkelon is carried away; Gezer is taken; Yenoam is annihilated;
> Ysiraal is desolated, its seed is not.

As Merneptah's expedition led through the territory in which the Israelites were settled after the conquest, the reference would seem to be unmistakable. Whether Israel was already in actual possession of the land in the time of Merneptah, as the allusion to its "seed" would indicate, is not certain.

It may not be too much to infer that the Hebrew tribes who were the ancestors of historic Israel penetrated Canaan before the defini-

tive conquest. Such of them as kept the integrity of their desert organization and their primal desert character came as enemies and maintained themselves by force. Other tribes, less strong in numbers, less warlike of spirit or more adaptable, merged with the native population and lost their identity. The tribes which famine urged on toward the fertile delta of the Nile were still shepherds and wanderers. They had in common their desert origin and a similarity of condition and experience. What other outward circumstances or what inner compulsions served to unite them before Moses performed his great work for Israel, history has not revealed.

III

SHEPHERDS IN EGYPT

A WANDERING Aramean was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and we cried unto Yahweh, the God of our fathers, and Yahweh heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression: and Yahweh brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

No event of their early history was so profoundly impressed upon the memory of the Israelites as the sojourn in Egypt and the exodus. Throughout their scriptures are frequent and impassioned references to this great initial crisis of their experience. It was in Egypt, they told themselves, that the family of Jacob became a people, expanding in numbers and at length powerful enough to escape from bondage. Here they were granted a leader whom Yahweh raised up to be their deliverer and guide, their lawgiver, and the founder of their religion. Though the several traditions vary in the details composing the incidents of the Egyptian sojourn, beginning with Abraham, resumed with Joseph and his brethren, and culminating in the liberation of the people under Moses, yet all agree as to the central fact. Israel dwelt in Egypt. And Yahweh rescued his people out of the hand of the oppressor, led them on their long wanderings in the wilderness, and brought them gloriously into the promised land.

A tradition so ardently cherished and transmitted with such piety

would seem to have some basis in fact. Few episodes in Israel's fortunes have been elaborated with equal wealth of circumstance. Among all the patriarchal narratives the story of Joseph is wrought with the greatest intricacy of plot, the subtlest character analysis, and the richest embellishment of accessories. The figure of Moses, magnified in retrospect through the mists of breaking day, is realized with a vivid completeness matched only by the consummate portrait of David, drawn from life. Though the event issued happily, vindicating the might of Yahweh and securing Israel's title among the nations, yet the memory of its humiliation is not lost or obscured. No people in its traditions invents of itself an ignominy which it has not actually suffered. That Israel remembered gladly the bondage in Egypt and exulted in it, attests a core of fact, round which imagination spun an iridescent tissue of romance.

Incursions of nomad tribes across the borders of Egypt such as the Hebrew traditions symbolize were not impossible or unknown. Perhaps the great migration out of the desert in the fourth millennium carried some of the wanderers to the valley of the Nile, for the Egyptian language in its oldest form bears traces of Semitic influence. A story of the Middle Kingdom, about 2000 B.C., tells how Sinuhe, a noble at the court of the Pharaoh, fleeing from Egypt meets at the border some Bedawy tribes; finding asylum with them, he is recognized by a sheikh among them "who had been in Egypt." Depicted on a tomb of a century later is a group of Semitic tribesmen, accompanied by women and children and asses and goats, and laden with articles of trade. The roads had long been open to diplomacy and commerce between Egypt and Canaan. But the Empire was exposed likewise to attack. After the Middle Kingdom had come to an end with the fall of the Twelfth Dynasty, about 1800, a strange people, many and pow-

erful, out of the east and north, poured in upon the Delta. There they established a sovereignty that laid all Egypt under subjection. For a century and more the invaders maintained themselves as masters of the country. With the rise to power of a new native dynasty, the Eighteenth, roundly 1600, these Hyksos or "shepherd Kings," after a struggle lasting nearly fifty years, were driven forth; and they disappeared from history as strangely as they had come. Were they Bedawin from the desert, as they were described by the Egyptians? Were they Canaanites from the strong cities of the coastland? Or were they of the mysterious race of the Hittites out of the distant north? Whoever they may have been, their victorious influx reveals the perennial liability of Egypt to invasion along her northeastern frontier.

A closer parallel to the Hebrews' entry into Egypt is found in a papyrus of the time of Amenhotep IV, the Pharaoh to whom were addressed many of the Amarna letters. From the turmoil of Canaan, suffering under the inroads of the Khabiru and devastation by the Sa-Gaz, some of the inhabitants sought refuge in Egypt. An officer of the Pharaoh writes concerning them: "Their countries are starving, they live like goats of the mountain. . . . A few of the Asiatics, who know not how they should live, have come [begging a home in the domain?] of Pharaoh, after the manner of your father's fathers since the beginning." So Abraham, in the Israelite tradition, went down into Egypt because of a grievous famine in Canaan. So too, Jacob, in a time of dearth, hearing there was corn in Egypt, sent his sons thither to buy food. Such missions from less favored countries were apparently not unusual, for the Pharaoh's officer cites immemorial custom as the justification of his act in admitting strangers into the privileged domain of Egypt. A document of the reign of Merneptah, the same who recorded his triumph over "Ysiraal," contains the report that a

"tribe of Bedawin from the land of Edom have been allowed to pass the fortifications of Thuku [Sukkoth?] to the pools of Pithom in the land of Thuku, to find sustenance for themselves and their flocks in the territory of the Pharaoh." In the secular flow and ebb over the borders, of which the Egyptian records have preserved these few notices, the sons of Jacob, with the sufferance of the imperial officers at the frontier, may have found entry into Goshen, on the eastern edge of the Delta, as one group among many, and, like other peaceably intentioned wanderers, were allowed a restricted range of territory in which to settle with their flocks.

With inborn pride of race, with David's glories and the splendors of Solomon still bright in memory, the early historians of Israel pictured their ancestors as a valiant people, able to confront the Egyptians on equal terms and worthy to stand in the august presence of the Pharaoh himself. Of the stupendous scope of Egyptian dominion they realized only so much as immediately concerned the personal fortunes of their heroes. Israel, drawn in magnified scale, fills the foreground; the might and majesty of Egypt serve but to enhance the eminence of Israel. Without undue emphasis, as though it were a matter of course, the Hebrew narrator tells how the beauty of Sarah excites the special remark of the Egyptians. The princes of Pharaoh, seeing her, praise her to the king, and she is brought into the royal house. For her sake, Abraham is enriched with lavish gifts at Pharaoh's own hands. When the incident results unhappily for the sovereign, Abraham is summoned into the supreme presence. The difficulty is explained away; and the Hebrew sheikh is graciously permitted to resume his journey under escort of the royal officers. Joseph, betrayed and sold into slavery, rises to a post of highest honor in the kingdom; only in respect of the throne is Pharaoh greater than he.

"And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt." And Moses also, spokesman of his people, had immediate access to Pharaoh's presence — a figure to threaten and command.

These traits, elaborated with such evident delight, are the very trappings of romance. Yet in principle a career like Joseph's is not improbable, for it is known that foreigners, among them slaves from Syria, rose to positions of influence in Egypt. Moreover, many of the details of the Joseph stories, whether adapted from old Egyptian tales or reflecting a knowledge of Egypt current in Israel in the time of the narrators, are faithful transcripts of Egyptian customs. But the relation of the Hebrew tribes resident in a little corner of the Delta to the vast Empire of the Nile is seen through the distorting medium of national pride and zeal for the religion of Yahweh. The conditions of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt were probably quite otherwise than as the narratives represent them, for the differences between the nomad Hebrews and the incredibly ancient civilization which they touched, but did not penetrate, were extreme.

Egypt was so old that it seemed never to have been young. The span of Israel was but a day. Most ancient of peoples of whom there is memory, the Egyptians were descended from a race whose origins are unknown. When history lifts the veil a little in the sixth millennium before Christ, the long slender valley of the Nile is revealed sown with villages grouped into small independent districts. Already the people were advanced on the way to civilization. They built houses of sun-dried brick, they moulded clay into varied and pleasing

forms, and with tools of bronze they carved ivory and stone. In boats with oars or sails they trafficked on the river with distant villages. As early as the forty-third century, they marked the returning seasons by a calendar year of three hundred sixty-five days. And they had invented writing.

The course of recorded Egyptian history is traced in terms of dynasties. The founder of the First Dynasty was Menes, about 3400. In the centuries preceding, the petty states had consolidated as the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt. These domains Menes brought together into a single nation, and he thus made himself sole ruler of united Egypt, the first of the Pharaohs. In the reigns of the first two Dynasties were laid the foundations of the nation's material greatness. The next four Dynasties, ruling at Memphis, at the apex of the Delta, from about 2900 to 2400, witnessed an amazing development in art and architecture as well as the extension of Egyptian influence abroad. The great pyramids at Gizeh are the work of Pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty. Trade was borne northward to the Phœnician coast and the islands of the Ægean, and southward to the farthest shores of the Red Sea. Upon the lapse of the Sixth Dynasty there follows a vaguely determined period of some three hundred years.

With the rise of the Eleventh Dynasty, the central authority has shifted from Memphis to Thebes, which henceforth for nearly a millennium remains the capital of the Empire. The sway of the Twelfth Dynasty, during more than two centuries beginning about 2000, embraces the classic period of Egyptian culture. A century after the fall of this magnificent Dynasty, Egypt was subjected to the domination of the Hyksos. With their expulsion, the native princes of Thebes regained the sovereignty as the Eighteenth Dynasty, about 1580. The nation, formerly home-keeping and peace-loving, embarked

upon an immense enterprise of foreign conquest. The Pharaohs of this Dynasty, furnished with the horse, which the Hyksos had brought to them, carried Egyptian arms to the banks of the upper Euphrates. They compelled the submission of the Aramean peoples and of the petty kings in Canaan. Asserting its suzerainty from Mesopotamia in the northeast to Nubia in the deep south, Egypt, vast and powerful beyond all other lands and nations, stands forth under the Eighteenth Dynasty as the first world-empire in history. At just this epoch the Hebrews were emerging from the desert in their errant progress toward civilization.

The Israelites have expressed themselves to later ages only in their scriptures. Of the Egyptians, every detail of life is illuminated by an extraordinarily abundant wealth of material remains. Their buildings and statues testify to their engineering skill, their mastery of technical processes, and their artistic genius. Reliefs and paintings on the walls of temples and tombs picture their manifold interests and occupations. Articles of use and adornment, the work of craftsman and jeweller, show their love of refined luxury. Their literature, in addition to numberless ritual texts, reveals their taste for poetry and romance. Despite their excessive concern with the life after death, their daily ways in every least manifestation disclose a highly colored and quite worldly existence. The lowest classes excepted, whose lot was a bitter one, the Egyptians cultivated assiduously pleasure and elegance.

In affairs, the Egyptians possessed superlative talent for organization. Conquerors abroad by disciplined armies, the Pharaohs were equally skilled in statecraft within the realm; offices were administered under a system of extended ramifications which finally by the nicest adjustments reverted to the central authority. Egyptian commerce was carried to the ends of the known world. In the sciences

and the liberal arts the people of the Nile were deeply expert; versed of course in all cunning magic, they also practised medicine with sound understanding; and there were wise men and philosophers outside the priesthood. Of those not of noble birth, the architect and the scribe were held in the greatest honor. Superb in art, mistress of all learning, Egypt at three transcendent epochs was surpassingly great among the nations.

The splendid Eighteenth Dynasty came practically to an end with the "heretic King" Amenhotep IV. In his zeal to establish a new religion, the worship of one god in place of the many of old Egypt, he turned from the career of conquest that had engaged his ambitious militant predecessors. Removing the government from Thebes, he founded in honor of his god the city of Akhetaton, and there he set up his capital; henceforth he devoted his energies to the propagation of the new faith, at the cost of Egyptian influence abroad. With good reason the princes of Canaan addressed to the devotionally musing royal idealist the letters discovered in the ruins of his ephemeral city, begging Egyptian support against the devastating raids of the Khabiru and the Sa-Gaz. For the withdrawal of Amenhotep from military enterprise had weakened the imperial control of Canaan, which the conquering Pharaohs of his Dynasty had compelled to acknowledge the overlordship of Egypt; and in the confusion that followed the change of policy, the coastland far distant from dreaming Akhetaton was uncovered to the invasions of marauding tribes out of the east.

So when the Hebrews pressed forth from the desert and moved against the strongholds of Canaan, the Empire was beginning to relax its grasp upon the vassal cities of its province. But the warlike tribes who sought a footing there yet felt the length and power of the Egyptian arm. Some of the newcomers, unable to establish them-

selves in the crowded territory of Canaan or urged by hunger, pushed on into the fertile lands of the Delta. There, few in numbers and unremarked by the teeming population of the Empire beyond them, were they allowed to pitch their black tents and graze their flocks in peace.

The land of Goshen, where the Hebrews were granted freedom to range, was a small strip of territory along the northeastern frontier of Egypt. Bounded on the north and south by deserts too high to be cultivated, it dwindled to a mere channel on the east. "A triangle of about ten miles in the side, with perhaps some minor extensions, is all that can have been comprised in Goshen." [1] And they were an insignificant people, one may fancy, these tent-dwellers, tending their flocks on the fringe of the great agricultural, trading and military Empire that stretched inconceivably into the south. But their earliest historian figured them otherwise, for he affirms proudly, "The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." With the same fervor of imagination, he records that they went out of Egypt "six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds, even very much cattle." A telling comment on this estimate is supplied by a traveller who has penetrated deep into the land and the spirit of the desert. "Taking into account the Semitic vulgar wise in narration to multiply a true number by tens, the '600,000 men' of Israel that ascended from Egypt might signify 60,000 or probably 6000 men; which were nearly the strength of all the tribes together of Annezy, that is now the greatest nomad people of Arabia and Syria." [2]

[1] W. M. Flinders Petrie: *Egypt and Israel*, p. 29.
[2] C. M. Doughty: *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, II, p. 605.

In the multitudinous life of Egypt this little group of rude shepherds was but the foam of a wave breaking on a farther shore. They felt, perhaps, the momentum of the sea of empire that surged by them, as they lingered and drifted on its edge. Surrounded by garrisons along this frontier which guarded the roads to Asia, they had evidence of the military prowess of the nation of which chance had made them an unregarded part; they may have witnessed, too, the march of armies setting out for conquest or returning laden with spoils. If they still kept the tribal independence of the desert in their little enclave, they were yet subject to the authority of the Pharaoh's officers. Therefore they remembered in after ages the armed might of Egypt, and they gloried the more in their deliverance. But of direct intercourse with the native people there was probably nothing; for every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews. Doubtless the Hebrews, on their side, were content to live their own life, apart and unmolested. Though Joseph took an Egyptian to wife, the daughter of the priest of On, and Moses was nurtured at the court of the Pharaoh, there are few hints in their traditions that the Hebrew sojourners lost their sense of racial separateness or were seduced to the worship of the native gods. In these circumstances it may be questioned if influences from the great centres of Egyptian culture reached the tent-dwellers in Goshen. They had no sight of the pyramids and storied monuments of old Memphis or the stupendous temples and colossal statues of Thebes; perhaps no rumor of these unimaginable splendors came to their far outlying corner of the land. The achievements of literature and gains of science, won by Egypt through ages of favored effort, passed their simple comprehension. In Goshen, so one may conjecture, the Hebrews remained what they had always been — keepers of flocks.

The control of Canaan, lost by Amenhotep IV and his immediate successors, was retrieved after fifty years by Seti I, second Pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty. He was followed on the throne by his son Ramses II, called the Great, whose reign of sixty-seven years was distinguished less for military triumphs than for its magnificence. In a royal line of builders, whose like the world has not seen and whose activities embraced millennia, Ramses was preëminent. By his prodigious unremitted efforts, Thebes and the whole valley of the Nile were further enriched by grandiose monuments. But the seat of government had now shifted again to the north; and in the Delta Ramses carried out enormous building enterprises. He restored Tanis, which was intended to rival Memphis and Thebes. Near the frontier which looked toward Asia he built the "store-city" of Pithom; and in the eastern Delta he founded the residence city, Per Ramses.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us: come, let us deal wisely (subtilely) with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us [as doubtless happened in fact with foreign groups resident near the Egyptian frontier], and get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. . . . And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.

The cost in human labor of the Pharaoh's colossal undertakings was beyond reckoning. Peasants, slaves, and the captives of foreign wars were ruthlessly impressed into the work. It is not surprising that shepherd tribes who had been permitted to range in the Delta were likewise compelled to serve. In a document of the reign of Ram-

ses II the writer reports: "I have obeyed the command which my lord gave me, saying, Give provision to the soldiers and to the 'Apriu-folk who drag stones for the great fortification of the temple, Ramses-meri-Amon." Further mention of the "'Apriu" in other contexts suggests the possibility of their equivalence with the Hebrews. In any case the Hebrew dwellers in Goshen may, as their traditions represent, have been forced to task work for the glory of the Pharaoh. Moreover, the fear that resident foreigners might combine with enemies of Egypt was grounded in experience. Some of the vassal princes of Canaan, as soon as the imperial authority was relaxed, united with the invading Khabiru to assert their independence of the Pharaoh. The eastern frontier of the Delta was ever exposed to assault by Bedawin out of the desert and by troublous restive bands from Canaan or the farther north. There was real danger that the nomads who had been granted access to Egypt might make common cause with their kinsmen from across the border to menace the unstable peace of the Empire. The facts of Egyptian history supply occasion and motive for Ramses' oppression of the Hebrews.

From the epoch of the incursions of the Khabiru into Canaan to the reign of Ramses II was a period of about two hundred years. How long the Hebrews had been in Egypt when a new king arose to set at forced labor the stranger people within his borders can only be surmised. It has happened always that when nomads, penetrating a region of settled agricultural life, finally obtain a footing there, they are gradually transformed to the new conditions, and the free wanderers of the desert become peasants attached to the land. Thus the Israelites, after their conquest of Canaan, fused with the native population, marrying with them, and accepting their customs and ritual practices; only by the stern admonitions of its prophets was Israel in

part restrained from forsaking Yahweh, God of Sinai and the wilderness, to worship the baals of Canaan. In Egypt, perhaps the tribes were at the point of transition: the Pharaoh made their lives bitter with all manner of service "in the field." On their wanderings in the wilderness after their deliverance, when they had reverted to their nomad ways, the people murmured out of the urgency of their deprivations: "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt for nought; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." And centuries later Moses is made to say: "The land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs." (Deut. 11 10.) Apart from these reminiscences, however, if they are true ones, there is no indication in the Hebrew records that the ancestors of Israel tilled the soil of Egypt; it is everywhere assumed that they were semi-nomads. If they remained shepherds, as they had come, it may be inferred that the Hebrews' sojourn in Goshen was relatively brief, extending through hardly more than two or three generations.

Of the tribes, traditionally twelve in number, which later constituted the Israelite nation, probably not all went down into Egypt. It may be that at the time of their first entrance into Canaan, as part of the great migration of the fifteenth century, there were two general groups, typified as the Leah tribes, who came from the northeast through the land of Aram, and the Rachel tribes, who entered Canaan from the south. It was the Rachel tribes, then, which wandered into Egypt under the leadership of Joseph. After the exodus, they united with kindred tribes still on the borders of Canaan, and together they moved from east of the Jordan to the conquest of the promised land. Among the latest to join them, in Canaan, coming up from the south was the powerful tribe of Judah. Another symbol for approximately

the same division of the groups was the concept of the Jacob tribes, who went down into Egypt, and the Israel tribes, who remained in Canaan. If this was their course, the reference to Israel in Merneptah's hymn of victory finds an interpretation. The subsequent union of these two groups is signified in the identification of Jacob with Israel. When the separate tribes came together as a nation under the monarchy, the great events in the history of individual tribes or groups were attributed to the "children of Israel" as a whole; for the Israelite narrators, looking back through the obscurity of crowded stirring centuries, assumed that the twelve tribes were sprung directly from the one ancestor, Jacob-Israel, and constituted a unity in the beginning.

It may be imagined that the Hebrews entered Egypt as a loose and accidental array of wandering tribes whom hunger had driven from the desert into a more generous land. Unable to gain a footing in turbulent Canaan, they pushed on toward the valley of the Nile and found pasturage in the fertile ranges of the Delta. There they grazed their flocks, as they had of old time in the oases of the desert, but now with a new sense of unusual good fortune. Though not forever. Bondage was laid upon them, and their lives were made bitter with hard service, to which the proud, free nomads were not wonted. The oppression which they suffered thus together welded them perhaps into a closer union, in the consciousness of a common fate. Then a leader arose among them who revealed to them the possibility also of a common future. Rescuing them out of their servitude, he brought them through desert regions to the borders of Canaan. These tribes were the vital creative nucleus which gathered to itself varied elements of kindred strain, but of different experience, to form the nation of a later age. In the travail of the Egyptian bondage, Israel was born. And the momentous events of the sojourn in the wilderness,

working with a temper and material which millennia in the desert had been slow to fashion, impressed swiftly upon this people, in youth new-given, the stamp of its unique character, holding promise of peculiar destiny.

IV

WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

THE historians of Israel, blending ancient traditions, popular legends, and echoes of memory into sustained narratives, set forth what they conceived to be the nation's divinely ordered past. Securely established in Canaan, the people had proved unfaithful to the God of the fathers. To win them back to their allegiance, the authors of the history hoped to inspire the nation with renewed devotion and enthusiasm by recounting in ideal forms the patient loving-kindness of Yahweh and the wonders of his mighty hand.

It was centuries since the deliverance from Egypt. The great events of this initial crisis, transfigured in retrospect, were invested with all the lustre and dread import that imagination could devise. Every stage of Israel's progress out of slavery to the conquest of Canaan was attended by signs and marvels. At the moment of their deepest humiliation, Yahweh intervened miraculously to rescue his people from the house of bondage, visiting the oppressors with grievous plagues and overwhelming the hosts of Pharaoh in the sea. In the hours of distress on desert marches, he gave the wanderers sustenance. He raised up Moses to be the deliverer of Israel, endowing him with wonder-working powers which vanquished all adversities. By the mouth of his prophet, Yahweh made known his will. Guided from on high, Moses organized the tribes into a people, conscious of a common purpose; and by the might of Yahweh's outstretched arm, their leader brought them prosperously through the dangers and deprivations of the wilderness to the borders of the promised land.

The narratives embodying these traditions are so interwoven and

involved that it is impossible to trace the course of events in their probable sequence. But tissue of fable as they are, a thread of historic fact seems to run through the intricate fabric of legend, with its imaginative vesture of persons and incidents. Moreover, the traditions, even as transformed to the special religious purposes of the narrators, have preserved many reminiscences of Israel's way of life in the desert steppes before the people entered Canaan to possess it for their own.

A change of king on the throne of Egypt brought a change of fortune to the Hebrew tribes in Goshen; and the free nomads were forced to task work to minister to the insatiate pride of the Pharaoh. Already they had labored in the building of two cities, when a commanding figure rose among them to rally them to a fateful enterprise. Born of Hebrew parents, he had been reared among the Egyptians, and received an Egyptian name.[1] When he was grown up, he rejoined his people serving at their tasks in Goshen. Seeing an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, he struck down the oppressor, and hid his body in the sand. When his act became known, Moses fled to the desert land of Midian. There he allied himself with the tribe of the Midianites or the Midianite clan of Kenites, marrying the daughter of the priest. While he was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law in the steppes, he received a revelation of the mountain-god of Sinai, in a flame of fire; and a voice charged him to return to Egypt, for the king who sought his life was dead, and to deliver his people out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Moses did as Yahweh required. He communicated the revelation

[1] The name *Mes*, *Mesu*, is Egyptian, meaning "son of" — some god. It occurs in Thutmose, Rameses. The Hebrew word *Mosheh* means not "drawn out," as suggested in the narrative, Ex. 2 10, but "drawing out."

to his kinsmen in Egypt; and with the promise of divine support and guidance, he roused them to their great undertaking. The moment was favorable. Taking advantage of a time of plague, to which the Nile valley was ever exposed, the Hebrews made their escape. The Egyptian troops who pursued them met disaster in the sea on the frontier. Reaching the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan, the Hebrews wandered there for a generation; and there Moses accomplished his work for Israel.

The race of which the Hebrews were sprung has produced many illumined men of God. From Moses to Mohammed, a long line of prophets have been granted access to the divine presence. Impelled by the fervor of immediate communion with God, they have launched themselves upon their world to found a new religion or to purify and transform the old. Some, like Amos, Zephaniah, and John the Baptist, have been as a voice crying in the wilderness, preaching repentance and proclaiming the imminent day of the Lord. Others, like Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Mohammed, have been men of affairs, gifted with political competence and rare powers of initiative and organization. First among them in point of time, if not also by virtue of his achievement, was the prophet leader who in the name of his God summoned his enslaved kinsmen to rise against their taskmasters, inspired them with his enthusiasm to a new direction of effort, and created the people of Israel.

In respect of the manner of his revelation, Moses was true to type. Solitude in the desert was a period of preparation. There God appeared to him in fire, and held converse with him. The legend is easily credible, for the theophany to Moses, the flame of light and the voice out of the fire, is characteristic of the mystical experience. More than this, the figure of Moses, taking shape by gradual accretion through centuries of tradition, was a composite, uniting in itself

many diverse elements. Thus the legend of his preservation as an infant was told in similar terms of Sargon I of Akkad, in far Babylonia. The circumstances of his early years as a "son" to the Pharaoh's daughter, his magical powers, surpassing the famed magic of Egypt, his wonder-working staff, are the creation of the legend-making imagination which is universal. But these garnishments of romance do not disguise the essential personality of Moses as a man of signal capacity for leadership, of exceptional skill in administration, and an authentic religious genius. The reality of Moses has overcome tradition.

It was natural that the fleeing tribes who had escaped from Egypt, as it seemed miraculously, should ascribe their deliverance to the mighty intervention of their God.

> Sing ye to Yahweh, for he hath triumphed gloriously,
> The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The burden and the antiquity of the song which thus celebrates the event bear witness to the fact of disaster to Israel's enemies; and the occasion may well have been the flight of the Hebrews from Goshen. But the rising of the enslaved tribes and their subsequent doings in the wilderness presuppose the initiative and the continued leadership of a dominant personality. A man of transcendent religious ardor, a prophet directly accredited of God, was needed to quicken the heavily afflicted, broken-spirited shepherds to the necessary resolution. In the long years of enforced labor in mortar and brick and all manner of service in the field, the children of former nomads had lost their desert craft and were likely to perish in the unfamiliar, fearsome wilderness, if no masterful leader were at hand to bring them securely through the perils and hunger and thirst of hostile wastes. The need of a guide across the desert was recognized in the traditions: for Yahweh was marvellously present in the pillar of cloud by day and the

pillar of fire by night, to show them the way; and afterwards Moses asked of his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, that he should be to them as eyes, to spy out a path over the trackless sands. But still another task awaited the fugitives. The vagrant tribes and the mixed multitude accompanying them must be welded into a people with a common interest and purpose before they could hope to wrest from its ancient, strongly established possessors a bountiful territory which they could make their home. If there were no record of Moses, a figure like Moses would have to be invented.

Yet the tribes who fled into the wilderness, crushed though they may have been by years of servile labor, had not lost all stamp and memory of their origin. For their traditions kept alive for centuries afterwards the imaginings of a people whose native land was the desert. Thus the narrative of Moses' return from Midian to Egypt has preserved a very old fragment of Hebrew lore. The historian in whose narrative the fragment is embodied as a fossil deposit used the episode to account for the practice of circumcising infants, which was held in later times to be a distinguishing mark of the people of Yahweh; but as the core of it and still recognizable are some of the most primitive conceptions of the race from which Israel was descended.

A wayfarer through the malign and solitary desert, accompanied only by wife and child, is set upon at night, in the place where he is lodged, by a demon, who seeks to kill him. His wife, daughter of a shepherd priest of the steppes, with the quick wit and power to act which characterized women of the desert in ancient heroic days, knows how to turn aside the anger of the malevolent one. Seizing a flint, for such are ready at hand on the barren slopes, she cuts off the foreskin of her infant son; and with the bleeding bit of flesh she

touches "his" person — the person either of her husband or of the demon. At the same time she pronounces the magic-working formula, "Now art thou to me a bridegroom of blood!" So he let him alone. The anger of the evil visitant is appeased, and he vanishes as he had come.

Circumcision was not peculiar to Israel. It was practised by the kindred tribes of Edom, Moab, and Ammon, and by the Phœnicians and the Arabs. It was known in Egypt before the Hebrews went down to sojourn there. It is found among primitive peoples in extreme parts of the world. The Philistines, from somewhere across the sea, were not circumcised; the only Semitic nations who did not practise the rite were the Babylonians and Assyrians. The custom reaches back into farthest antiquity. Originally, perhaps, it was a tribal mark, signifying the youth's acceptance into full membership in his group; it had further a religious meaning, for by this act the individual was devoted to the worship and service of the communal god. In Israel the rite was transferred from youth to infancy. Underlying the incident of the symbolic circumcision of Moses' son, is the conception of the efficacy of blood, which figures so largely in the beliefs of the desert. The Hebrew writers agree in tracing the origin of the custom to the period when the Israelites were shepherds and wanderers. The Priestly author assigns it to Abraham, the Ephraimite narrator to Joshua. The story of Zipporah and Moses is much the oldest of the Hebrew accounts. In spite of its transformation by the early Judahite historian in whose narrative it was introduced for its explanatory purpose, the episode, complete in its antique brevity, still breathes the wild spirit of its origin. The belief in hostile mysterious beings of air and earth, threatening men capriciously, the reliance upon the potency of magical act and formula to avert their attack, the quick resolution of the desert-born woman able to meet and

overcome the sudden danger — these traits reveal the genius of Israel in its beginnings. And not the least element in that genius was its power to transmute the primal crude superstitions of its inheritance into enlightened faith in the justice, righteousness, and loving-kindness of the one God.

Another reminiscence of the desert has a setting in the narratives of the oppression in Egypt. On the night when Yahweh went through the land to smite all the firstborn of the Egyptians, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat upon his throne even unto the firstborn of the maidservant behind the mill, and the firstborn of cattle, on that terrible night the avenger marvellously spared his own people. For the children of Israel had given a sign to the destroyer. Instructed by their leader Moses, they performed a solemn ceremony against his coming. According to families they took a lamb and "killed the passover"; with a bunch of hyssop dipped in the blood, they smeared the lintel and doorposts of their dwellings; and they remained indoors until the morning. So Yahweh "passed over" the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt.

Many ancient usages survived in the religious practice of Israel whose primary meaning had long since been obscured or wholly lost. It is characteristic of the narrators that they explained the origin of such customs by reference to some historical event or significant episode. So circumcision, the Sabbath, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the anointing of the sacred stone in Beth-el, the prohibition against eating the sinew of the thigh, — each has its ætiological legend. One of the oldest feasts among the Israelites was the Passover. In the story of the death of the firstborn of Egypt and the escape of the oppressed tribes of the Hebrews, the Passover found a signally appropriate occasion. But it is evident that here, as so often elsewhere, the custom created the event. For the Feast of the Passover as observed in

Israel, was a composite, embodying some of the most primitive rites of the shepherd clans of the desert.

When Moses repeatedly asks of the Pharaoh that he let the Hebrews go, and is met by repeated refusals, followed each by a plague upon Egypt, he urges as the reason of his demand, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Yahweh our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." The Pharaoh, harassed by a succession of grievous plagues, at length grants permission to the Hebrews to hold their sacrifice in the land where they are. But Moses objects, "It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to Yahweh our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Yahweh our God, as he shall command us."

The sacrifice to which the spokesman of the enslaved tribes thus summoned them before the Pharaoh's presence may well have been the spring festival of nomads of the desert. It could be properly observed only in the land belonging to their god. It was a shepherds' festival, an offering of the firstlings of the flock. With the Passover was combined, in the narratives of the exodus and in later Israelite usage, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, an offering of the first fruits of the ground. But though the symbolism of the two rites was similar, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was an agricultural festival, adopted by Israel only after the settlement in Canaan. The ancient Passover, observed by families within a tribe, had a peculiarly domestic character; and in the same spirit it was cherished in Israel. It was at once a sacrifice and a feast: for it was customary among shepherds to slaughter only for sacrifice; and the accompanying meal shared by the god and his worshippers in common served to reunite the tribe

with its god for the coming year. Vitally inwrought with the ceremony of the Passover was the old conception, universal and eternal in the desert, of the efficacy of blood. The night of this festival of the full moon of spring, held after sundown in the middle of the first month, was a night of danger, when the destroyer was abroad and must be placated; it was enjoined upon the Israelites as a night of *watching* unto Yahweh. So in the solemn dark, the blood of the sacrifice was smeared on the tent door, averting the threat of hostile beings that might lie in wait to strike, perhaps some demon of the plague: — "lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword!"

So ancient was this shepherds' festival of Passover that the meaning of the Hebrew term for it cannot be adequately explained. The name — as is probably also true of the name, *Yahweh* — goes back to the primal speech of the desert from which the Hebrew language was descended. In the ceremonies of this world-old ancestral feast may be traced the beginnings of beliefs and ritual observances, which after centuries of residence in a more favored land and of a richer, more complex way of life still linked the Israelites with their origins. Though the prophets proclaimed a God who delighted not in sacrifices and offerings and feasts and solemn assemblies, yet the people were ever tenacious of their ancient familiar customs. Yahweh was still to them their old God, who left his home in the steppes to dwell with them in the land they had won by conquest, indeed with the very help of Yahweh, God of battle-hosts, and who demanded as of yore the blood of the sacrifice. At times the people, perhaps not wittingly, had changed allegiance from Yahweh to the baals of Canaan, but they kept their antique feasts.

In later ages the Passover acquired more and more a memorial character. It became to the Israelites and increasingly to the Jews

the symbol and remembrance of the power of Yahweh manifested to his chosen people in the great deliverance. To-day throughout the world, wherever they may be, the descendants of the primal desert tribes, in the middle of the first month of spring, gather by families in their dwellings after sundown to keep the Passover. The children ask, "What mean ye by this service?" And the father answers, "It is the sacrifice of Yahweh's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt." From now back to eldest beginnings are how many thousands of years! This fidelity to racial type and loyalty to tradition, which millennia might transform but could not eradicate, traits unparalleled in any other people except the kindred Arabs, are of the essence of the temper of Israel. To its power to endure, annealed in the fires of sun-stricken sands, Israel owed in large measure its peculiar history.

After the fleeing tribes had made good their escape from Egypt, they journeyed through the wilderness, and at length reached the oasis of Kadesh. There they lingered for some years. And thence they set out for the conquest of Canaan.

The stories of this momentous period, retold in successive ages with ever greater intricacy, are a tangled skein. Interwoven of shreds loosely joined, appearing in duplicate or discordant passages, the course of events may be unravelled with only a chance of finding the right clue. The duration of the sojourn in the wilderness is uncertain; perhaps it was a generation. The route followed by the Hebrews cannot be traced definitely. Incidents are recounted as happening vaguely along the march, though indeed the names are cited of places in the desert known to the Israelites. Many of the places, so far as they can be identified, are in the vicinity of Kadesh. The legends attaching to them are made to serve as explanations of the

names; and the episodes were used by the writers to fill out and embellish the stories of the wilderness, which otherwise were so lacking in actuality and genuinely historical character. Suddenly the tortuous flow of narrative is blocked by the dense mass of legal enactment and formula given at Sinai, which extends with its setting of incident relative to the legislation, from the nineteenth chapter of Exodus through the whole of Leviticus to the tenth chapter of Numbers; at this point the narrative resumes its seeming continuity, but the guiding thread is still beyond sure recovery. Yet all the versions agree that at some time the Hebrews sojourned in Kadesh, though the increasing emphasis in after generations upon events at Sinai tended to efface the real significance of this oasis, sacred immemorially to wanderers in the wilderness of the south. Out of endless uncertainties of time and place emerges at last the probability that Kadesh, with its pasture lands and streams of living water, was the great scene of Moses' work for Israel.

South of Canaan and thence southwestward is spread the region of steppes which the Israelites knew as the Wilderness of Zin and of Paran. In its interminable reaches of limestone hills sown with flints and but the sparsest vegetation, it is "one of the most inhospitable of all deserts — one which, since the Mohammedan invasion, has been an unenvied resort of defeated tribes too weak to face the strenuous life of the greater deserts." "Only in one place in all this country is there a stream of real running water that can serve for irrigation — in the little valley of Ain el Guderat [close by Kadesh], where for two or three miles fields of corn and spreading trees refresh the eyes wearied by the glare of the sun on white ground and polished flints, and by the uniform grey scrub on bare hillsides and in grey-brown valleys. . . . In summer it is blisteringly hot, and in the winter cold with the unbridled cold of an abandoned country over which the

wind can rage in unchecked fury." [1] In the heart of this region, some fifty miles south of Beer-sheba and less than two hundred miles from the borders of Egypt, was the great oasis of Kadesh. Only here, along the desert march of the Hebrews, were water and pasturage enough to maintain them for any considerable time. As its name indicates, Kadesh was a holy place. Oasis and sanctuary, it was frequented also by tribes friendly to the Hebrews, if not linked with them by ties of kinship. To the east, on the mountain range of Seir, lay Edom, who was Esau, elder twin-brother of Jacob. To the king of Edom Moses sent messengers: "Thus saith thy brother Israel . . . Behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border." Southeast of Kadesh, Midian had its seat. Hither Moses had fled from Egypt in his youth and married the daughter of the tribal priest. Back — or west — of the wilderness of Midian was Horeb, whence, according to one version, Yahweh revealed his name to Moses: and on the way between Midian and Egypt, according to another account, Moses heard the voice of Yahweh out of the burning bush. When therefore Moses, as spokesman of the Hebrews, asked leave of the Pharaoh to withdraw three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice unto Yahweh, it may be that the goal he set for his people was the ancient sanctuary of Kadesh, in a region where it is implied the worship of Yahweh was already known.

Against the vague, shifting phantom background of the wilderness that recedes into unreckonable distance, the awesome figure of Moses, solidly imagined, commands events. A man of God, later generations conceived him to be, in fullest measure, having plenary power to work marvels; with ever-augmented glory in fervent recollection, he was priest, prophet, lawgiver, the savior of the tribes, the creator of the nation. The farther each epoch was removed in time,

[1] Woolley and Lawrence: "The Wilderness of Zin," *P. E. F. Annual*, 1914.

the more of its inheritance and own achievement it imputed to the effective agency of Moses. To him Yahweh communicated the Ten Words, inscribed on two tables of stone. The Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20 20–23 33), the oldest code of Hebrew law, in written form dating from the period of the monarchy, was fitted into the story of his work. Explicitly assigned to his authorship was the legislation promulgated in the reign of Josiah, toward the end of the seventh century. And finally the enormous mass of ritual prescriptions and civil ordinances formulated by priests after the Exile was ascribed to his inspired utterance.

Increasingly in the view of later generations, the crucial event of the wilderness sojourn was the giving of the Law. By the instrumentality of Moses, Yahweh made known his will. According to the narratives as finally compiled, the scene was the Mount of God, Sinai or Horeb. Here from unremembered ancientness Yahweh, God of fire and cloud and earthquake, had his seat. In one of the oldest poems surviving in Israel it is written:

> Yahweh, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
> When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
> The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
> Yea, the clouds dropped water.
> The mountains quaked at the presence of Yahweh,
> Even yon Sinai at the presence of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

Of similar tenor a poem composed when Israel was long since established in Canaan under a king voices a distant reminiscence:

> Yahweh came from Sinai,
> And beamed forth unto them from Seir;
> He shined forth from mount Paran,
> And he came [to Meribath-Kadesh?]

So the mountainous region eastward of Kadesh was the home of Yahweh of old time. Here Yahweh spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. The word for bush, *seneh*, used only in this connection, holds in

its likeness to *Sinai* the play upon words characteristic of a heightened moment of Hebrew style. The volcanic nature of the region might well give rise to the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night which seemed to guide the Hebrews through the wilderness. Volcanic also are the phenomena that attended the theophanies of Yahweh on Sinai, the thunders and lightnings and thick cloud. "And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked because Yahweh descended upon it in fire, and the whole mount quaked greatly." "And the appearance of the glory of Yahweh was like devouring fire on the top of the mount."

Therefore in far retrospect, the towering bulk of Sinai, holy mountain of Yahweh, dominated the wilderness. As in the physical processes of nature, clouds gathered about its head fraught with lightning and tempest, so in virtue of its spiritual import dreadful and mysterious, this Mount of God attracted to itself all the traditions of fateful happenings when Yahweh chose the wandering tribes to be his people. Doubtless an influence streamed from Sinai which reached the sojourners in the oasis of Kadesh; for there on the mount, remote, God had his habitation. But it is probable that in the more primitive conception, as the poems represent, Yahweh himself came from Sinai to the people in Kadesh. To a later age it seemed more fitting that the people should betake themselves to the sacred mountain to receive God's revelation and commandments; so that events which happened actually at Kadesh were transferred by the narrators to Sinai. Likewise, the crucial achievements of Israel in its beginnings, which the narratives figure as single decisive acts of Yahweh at his holy mountain, were in reality a gradual development, wrought out of the necessities of the new conditions in which the Hebrews found themselves as they were encamped on the borders of Canaan. Israel was not a creation but a growth.

Most of the legislation attributed to Moses is manifestly the product of after ages, for it presupposes the conditions of life of an agricultural people already advanced in the complex social relationships of a long-established civilization. In the various groups of laws, none of which received written form until after the institution of the monarchy, may still be traced a few survivals or memories of ancient desert custom. A group of commands, cited by the Ephraimite writer in Exodus 20 23f. and 23, and paralleled in the Judahite version in Exodus 34, embodies three prescripts which relate to usages at a period when the Hebrews were still nomads. "The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Likewise shalt thou do with [thy ox and] thy sheep." "The fat of my feast shall not remain all night until the morning." "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk." These ritualistic commands are probably older than Israel's worship of Yahweh. In civil and criminal law, there is little in substance that Moses may be thought to have originated. The principle of retaliation or compensation, a life for a life, an eye for an eye, underlying Hebrew practice, was the very foundation of the most primitive desert justice. The commands against murder, theft, adultery, and false witness, cited in the decalogues of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, have parallels in the code of Hammurabi, a thousand years before Moses. And yet, the successive givings of the Law — in variant versions of the Ten Words, in the promulgation of the detailed codes of legislation and ritual prescription — so, too, Moses' several visits to the top of the mountain to receive God's commands, finally all the marvellous circumstances attending the converse of Yahweh with his people, these are but symbols and the imaginative reconstruction of a great central fact. During the sojourn in the wilderness, the Hebrews were given a new revelation and understanding of Yahweh; and Israel received certain primary and germinal forms of its law. The

Torah, or "direction" of Yahweh, communicated by Moses, however rudimentary, constituted the nucleus of that ethical law, whose unfolding with a power of universal and eternal application was Israel's service to the world. Though no single detail of the great body of Hebrew law given in the Pentateuch can be certainly ascribed to Moses, yet it was not without reason that each new code in succeeding centuries was promulgated in his name. For he founded a principle which was capable of extension to all the increasing needs of a people in the fullest development of their distinctive civilization. The Torah, instituted by Moses, supplied the form and method of all later legislation. By his instrumentality, the "custom" of the desert was superseded by the "law of God." Thus early in Israel's history were established a tradition and a practice which served in after ages to support the spiritual leaders of the nation as they won an ever widening scope for the fulfilment of justice and righteousness.

In the view of later generations, when Yahweh, through the mediation of Moses, revealed himself by name to the Hebrews, disclosing thus the very secret of his being, by that act of special favor he chose Israel to be his people. He delivered them from Egyptian bondage. The deliverance accomplished, he laid commandments upon them. The Hebrews, on their part, acknowledged Yahweh to be their God. He had proved his might, greater than all other power. His commandments, therefore, they accepted as the law of their God. "All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do." Hereupon followed a *covenant* between Yahweh and his people. For so, ancient usage ordained in transactions of great moment; lacking the compulsions of formal external authority, the parties to an agreement bound themselves by a covenant to the performance of mutual obligations. Accordingly the Hebrews' acceptance of Yahweh's sovereign law was ratified by a solemn covenant. As leader and representative of the people, Moses

officiated on their behalf. Building an altar and twelve pillars, he sent young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt offerings unto Yahweh.

And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant [containing Yahweh's laws], and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Yahweh hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh hath made with you upon all these words.

Faithfully picturing the antique practice, and vivid, such glimpses of actuality, rare and like living water and green places in the dry reaches of legal formula, bring dim figures out of the shadows of distance into present image and movement. Now follows a passage of singular charm. The quick imagination is loosed to range through the splendors of heaven; then with no sense of transition in effect, it falls sharply to earth and the ways of men.

Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.

In terms of a mutual agreement, hallowed by the blood of the sacrifice and communion of God and people, Israel conceived its special and peculiar relationship to Yahweh. Other tribes were linked with their deities by the bond of natural kinship. Yahweh by his free act had chosen Israel to be his people; Israel of its own will accepted Yahweh as its God. The covenant in the wilderness, so Israel passionately believed, was the charter of the nation and the deepest secure foundation of its religion.

Although tradition and record tended more and more to concentrate the crucial events of the wilderness upon the scene at the Mount of God, the early narratives have preserved incidents which happened probably at Kadesh. This oasis was in the vicinity of Midian. It was in the land of Midian that Yahweh first revealed himself to Moses. Thither Moses had fled from Egypt; there he had married the daughter of the priest. In this region the Hebrews encamped after their deliverance; and here Jethro, priest of Midian and Moses' father-in-law, came to visit them, for he had heard how that Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt. In the best antique manner, with a few simple strokes, the little story traces the free sweeping line of nomad courtesy in highest expression. Against the vague background of unbounded spaces, it throws into bright relief the innate dignity and plastic grace of figures in open air.

Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness. . . . And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how Yahweh delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Yahweh had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said,

Blessed be Yahweh,
Who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians,
And out of the hand of Pharaoh.
Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods:
Yea, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly against them.

And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Thus the occasion, at once intimate and ceremonious, reaches its climax, as the Bedawy custom is, in sacrifice and feasting. Jethro slays a lamb, which he offers to the deity in fire upon the altar. Therewith the priest, and the elders of the tribe whose guest he is, gather about the sacrificial meal. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that it is not Moses but Jethro who conducts the sacrifice. Aaron and the elders of Israel participate, but Moses himself is not mentioned. Doubtless the narrative preserved the true tradition: but to a later age it seemed unfitting that Moses should play a part subordinate to the priest of another tribe; and therefore the easiest method of obviating the difficulty was to omit Moses' name altogether. It is assumed further that an altar to Yahweh is already at hand; so his worship was known at this sanctuary before the Hebrews came. Moreover, their god is acknowledged also by the priest of Midian, for he says, "Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods!" The implications of the legend, then, point to the region of Midian as the original home of Yahweh. And it was during their sojourn at Kadesh that the Hebrews were initiated by the Midianites into the rites of Yahweh worship.

But this was not the only service of Midian to Israel. On the morrow of Jethro's arrival, Moses resumes his daily task. He sits in judgment for his people; and the people stand about him from the morning till the evening. Remarking the press of causes upon him which is like to wear away even his superb energy, Jethro protests decisively that Moses is not able to carry so great a burden alone; and he suggests that Moses provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain — here echoes the voice of the great prophets of later centuries — and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, of fifties and tens, to judge the people at all seasons. Every great matter they shall bring to

Moses, but every small matter they shall judge themselves. Complaisantly Moses heeds the counsel of the priest of Midian.

So the ancient desert tribe of the Midianites, whose home was but a few days' march from Canaan, were the teachers of Israel in social administration and in religion. Such is the import of these early narratives. But herewith the query propounds itself inevitably: If Yahweh was Midian's god before he was the god of Israel, why was it that Israel and not Midian was the bearer of a religion whose God was to overcome the yet unknown western world? The answer is unfolded step by faltering step in the long development of Israel's genius.

The story of Jethro's visit pictures Moses in the act of declaring the law. When the people have a matter in dispute, they come to Moses to inquire of God: he judges between a man and his neighbor; and he makes them to know the statutes of God and his laws. In Israel, to "inquire of God" was to seek a decision by recourse to the oracle or sacred lot, which lay in the custody of the priest. The decision thus made known was the *Torah* of Yahweh. As entrusted with the lot, therefore, Moses officiates as priest. Concerning the priesthood, personified in Levi, it is said in a poem composed in the time of the monarchy but placed on the lips of Moses,

> Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy godly one.
> . . . . . .
> They [the sons of Levi] shall teach Jacob thy judgments,
> And Israel thy law.

The *Thummim* and *Urim*, together with the *Ephod*, were employed in the casting of the sacred lot. The use of the oracle is mentioned frequently in the historical narratives down through the reign of David. Later, with the gradual spiritualizing of the religion of Yahweh, it came into disfavor with the great prophetic teachers of the nation, though they still allude to it. The Ephod and the Thummim and Urim

were appurtenances of the official dress of the High Priest in post-exilic Judaism, but their significance in that age was traditional and symbolic. Though resort to the sacred lot seems therefore to have lapsed, its importance for the beginnings of the Israelite nation was immense. The practice of seeking to know the will of Yahweh, in cases for which there was no precedent, constituted the basis for the whole development of Hebrew law. The case, once thus decided, thereupon furnished a precedent; and thence were evolved the formal judgments termed the statutes and ordinances of God. It was characteristic of Israel to identify the commandments of Yahweh with all law, applying to every relation of life, with civil and criminal law no less than ceremonial and moral. All requirements formulated as law were equally of divine inspiration and decree. So Moses was at once priest, judge, and legislator. The great body of commandments, judgments, statutes and ordinances which the narratives ascribe to revelation by Yahweh in the thunders of Sinai may well have had its really historical origin in the oracles of God, however few and primary, communicated by the agency of Moses to the people at Kadesh. At this ancient sanctuary in the wilderness, Moses laid the foundation of Hebrew justice.

But the people were not always amenable to the will of God, made known to them by Moses. They were a "mixed multitude," these wanderers, who had come up out of servitude in Egypt: perhaps the Hebrews in their escape had swept along with them aliens like themselves who had been forced to task work, and with these aliens also the flotsam of other tribes adrift on the Egyptian border. Often they murmured at the hardships of the wilderness. The rabble among them, ever unruly, lusted exceedingly, clamoring for more substantial fare than the desert could supply; and even the children of Israel wept, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the

good things of Egypt, but now our very life is dried away! Time and again, when the people suffered want of water, they reproached their leader: Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children with thirst? And they were ready to stone him. But in every crisis, Moses aided by his converse with God was able to rescue them out of their distress. When they came to a spring that proved to be bitter, he cast into it a branch of a tree that God showed him, and the water was made sweet. Again, with his wonder-working staff, he smote a rock, and water gushed forth in abundance. When they hungered, Moses interceded with God, who miraculously provided them bread and meat. Manna, small flakes like hoar frost on the ground, rained down from heaven as the dew; and a wind from the sea, sent by Yahweh, brought quails in such measure that the people sickened with excess. In the absence of their leader, the people were ever forward to break loose. One episode, recounted in a strand of narrative not of the earliest, may yet have been typical of their rebelliousness. When they saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, they gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said, Up, make us a god which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And Aaron, out of the gold despoiled from the Egyptians, fashioned a molten calf, and he built an altar before it. And the people rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings; and they sat down to eat and to drink, and they rose up to play.

So Moses' charge was not an easy one, to control the crowd of fugitives whom he led through the wilderness. Yet by his administrative skill he found means to bring a kind of order from the confusion. Upon the counsel, so it is narrated, of his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, he appointed rulers of thousands, of hundreds, fifties, and

tens. Historically, the same form of communal division obtained among the Edomites, the Arabs of the desert, and indeed the Philistines. In Israel it continued far down into the kingdom, but its origin dates back to the nomadic period. As the rulers served not only as judges but as officers of the people, the tribes were thus organized for war, which the immediate future held in store for them. Quite as important as a formal organization of their numbers, however, was the awakened consciousness of a common purpose that Moses impressed upon them. In the worship of Yahweh, accepted by the Hebrews in the wilderness, lay the compelling unifying force which at length wrought the Hebrew tribes into the nation of Israel.

Perhaps some of the mixed multitude never merged in the group that Moses labored prodigiously to fashion, but drifted apart again into the desert. Even among the clans of true Hebrew strain were turbulent spirits who rebelled against the authority of the sheikh. On one occasion two men of the tribe of Reuben dared publicly to defy Moses' judicial prerogatives. They refused to answer his summons, saying, "We will not come up; is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, but thou must needs make thyself also a prince over us?" Apparently they accused Moses of perverting justice, for he made defence before Yahweh, "Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them." The reference to the offering by the rebels might imply that they had sought to hold converse with Yahweh independently of the mediation of Moses as priest. The scene that follows is tremendous. For the quarrel was more than a merely private dispute. As a matter which concerned his whole influence with the people, Moses brought to bear on it all the weight of majesty attaching to his office. Attended by the elders, he repaired in state to the quarter of the camp

where the offenders had their tents. A crowd having gathered to see the outcome, Moses ordered them to disperse. "And Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood at the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little ones." Then Moses, solemnly invoking Yahweh, called down divine judgment upon the recalcitrants. The authority of Moses was vindicated in the event: for an earthquake opened a cleft in the ground which swallowed up the insurgents and all their households, and they went down alive into Sheol. And the earth closed upon them. Another time, Moses' title as the prophet of Yahweh was challenged by Aaron, traditional ancestor of the priests, and by Miriam, sister of Moses and herself a prophetess. Again Yahweh intervened and reëstablished the primacy of Moses.

These legends are capable of various interpretations. Events of tribal significance are often represented in the narratives of Israel's beginnings in terms of the acts of individuals. So Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, may typify the pretensions of the oldest among the sons of Jacob to bear the leadership. So too, Aaron is made to authenticate the rights and privileges of the priesthood. Moses himself is the inclusive concrete presentment of all that Israel accomplished in this momentous period of its history. From another angle, however, it is possible to discern in these episodes more than a mere symbol and generalization; they are a record of realities. The loose, inconstant rabble, yearning back to the flesh-pots of Egypt, lived on into later generations, the scorn and despair of the prophets. But the desert furnished a stouter metal, which ages had tempered and which men of genius forged to great uses. Thus the rebels in the camp are true to form, for their defiance breathes the ungovernable spirit of their race, which does not willingly submit to authority. Israel was always characterized by a strong individualism. Not only

was its strength never comparable to that of Egypt and Babylonia, lacking their numbers, but the national life rested on wholly different foundations. The mighty states imposed by sheer mass, directed from above. Israel won its place by the personal force of its great men. Of these, Moses was the first. The kind of material in which he worked explains the difficulties and the possibilities of his task. What he achieved with it was the measure of his own powers and an earnest of Israel's future. The labors of Moses forecast the history of the nation.

In the wilderness south of Canaan the Hebrews lingered for a generation. Great things had happened, whose importance perhaps the people did not realize; for they lived the life of any desert tribe, fortunate at the moment in the possession of water and grazing land. But with increase of numbers, their oasis at Kadesh no longer sufficed for their needs. To the north a wonderful country invited them, a land flowing with milk and honey. They remembered that of old time their fathers had pitched their tents in Canaan, before they went down into Egypt and suffered bondage. Now once again conquest seemed possible; for more closely knit than when they had fled from their oppressors, they were organized for war. Their god too, whose worship they had newly accepted, already had shown himself powerful, in that he had mightily delivered them from Egypt and brought them through the perils of the wilderness to the water courses of their present home. In the name of Yahweh, God of war, they set forward.

But Canaan was not easily to be won.

V

THE PROMISED LAND

The Empires of Egypt and Babylonia rose and flourished along the prodigal valleys of great rivers. The little land of Canaan is but the continued thrust of the desert descending to the sea. Severed by the deep cleft of the rushing Jordan from the rocky headlands that fall away eastward illimitably into the Arabian sands, the strip of coast is wrested from the wastes by the moist winds of ocean and the few water-courses that impregnate the lower levels. Desert and oasis, highland wilderness and luxuriant mead, compressed in abrupt combination and contrast, — the violent diversity of the country is accentuated by the smallness of the scale. A day's journey may range from tropic heat to icy cold. The snows of Hermon overlook the green expanse of Esdraelon; along the shore, mountains crowd a narrow plain into the sea; and other fertile reaches are but intervals among the barren hills. Neighbored by mighty states, a territory so confined in area, so broken of surface, and divided against itself in all its parts, had no chance of worldly greatness, no hope of imperial dominion. Yet Canaan seemed to adventurers fleeing their parched withholding sands to be a land flowing with milk and honey. And this little country has fostered as its own many vagrant tribes which the desert mother could not sustain.

Before invaders came from the desert, Canaan was already peopled. Its first tenants have left as their only record rude flint instruments such as man fashioned in his beginnings. A later age reveals traces of another passing. At Gezer, on the edge of the maritime plain, a race of small stature lived in caves, partly natural,

partly hewn out of the soft limestone with tools of flint. Were the Horites, whom Israel seemed to remember from far-off times, a survival of these ancient cave-dwellers? Larger in frame than they and therefore of a different stock, a people of a yet later period, in Galilee, in the South, and in the country east of Jordan, reared groups of megalithic monuments; and great caves cut as labyrinthine chambers may also be their work. Perhaps their descendants were the giant folk of whom the Hebrew spies brought back to Moses a terrifying report at the border of the promised land; and echoes of such a stalwart race resound in the literature of Israel.

In the fourth millennium a great migration from Arabia brought the Semites into Canaan. The newcomers built cities, defended by walls and towers, arming themselves with the club, the bow, and the lance. With edged flint they ploughed and reaped; they gathered fruit of the fig-tree, and cultivated the vine. Of clay they moulded jugs, bowls, and lamps, which reveal a dawning sense of beautiful form. Henceforward the peoples of Canaan were mainly Semitic; breaking in as nomads from the desert, each successive group of invaders with time became attached to the soil. But the civilization which they developed throughout the two millennia before the Hebrews came, reaping where they had not sown, was ever subject to influences from other lands.

For Canaan spread across the path of empire. From Babylonia the highway of conquest and trade led northwestward through Mesopotamia, then turned south into Syria to follow the strip of lowland along the sea; from Egypt the stream rising far in the south swept east across the peninsula of Sinai, and thence northward by the coast, meeting the drift from the east in the narrow plains of Canaan. Along this course the flow and ebb of mightier peoples up and down her confines between mountains and sea made the history

of the country. Continuously the prey and battle-ground of greater states, Canaan never became a nation.

Already in the opening centuries of the third millennium, Egypt, now a united kingdom, was reaching out to Canaan and beyond to Syria, to lay the rich products of those countries under tribute to its increasing magnificence. Snefru, about 2900 B.C., last king of the Third Dynasty and builder of the earliest pyramid, brought cedar-wood from Lebanon. A document of the Sixth Dynasty reveals a swift glimpse of the Canaanite scene: it is reported that in the course of a military expedition sent by the Pharaoh Pepi I, "the castles were destroyed, the fig-trees and vines cut down, and the farmsteads burned." And to the same effect, the wall of a contemporary tomb chamber shows an attack by Egyptian troops against a fortified city of the Semites. A wall-painting in a later time, about 1900, depicts a visit in Egypt of Canaanite merchants, laden with their wares. In exchange for the products of their own land, they must have brought home things of use and beauty wrought by the cunning craftsmen of Egypt, which might serve as models for native artisans. Objects of Egyptian workmanship dug from the soil of Canaan are at once material evidence of the contact of the two countries and a symbol of the influence which the Empire of the Nile exerted upon a lesser people through an intercourse of centuries.

Farther than Egypt from the Westland in distance, yet Babylonia was more closely linked with Canaan by community of race. For the Semites, although they yielded during long periods to invading peoples, persistently maintained their supremacy in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. The culture which their Empire diffused throughout the eastern world stamped with its own distinctive and consummate impress the ruder life of a kindred people in a less favored land. Its armies and its caravans, flung across Mesopo-

tamia and Canaan to the border of Egypt, carried with them the manner of thinking and the arts wrought out through ages in opulent plains. The Babylonian language and script became the international medium of diplomacy and commerce. In Canaan, architecture and handiwork were fashioned after patterns derived from the Empire. The laws of Babylonia, even though imposed upon the coastland by force of conquest, found occasion and acceptance among a people of like origin and temper. Gods of the imperial pantheon were welcomed in the western province; and myths and legends originating in the valley of the Two Rivers passed to Canaan and became a common possession. To this culture the Hebrew invaders fell heir. Israel's struggle to maintain itself against Canaanite example and influence, therefore, was ultimately a contest with Babylonia.

The uncertain lights of earliest dawn reveal the alluvial plain northwards from the Persian Gulf as already settled by a race whose origins remain unknown. By the time the dynastic Egyptians had established themselves along the Nile, before 3400 B.C., the people of this eastern land of Sumer had developed a complex civilization. The territory was divided among a group of mutually independent city-states, chief among which were Eridu, Ur — whence Abraham is fabled to have gone forth — Larsa, Erech, and Nippur. Cultivators of the soil, this people constructed an elaborate system of canals. They built of brick great temples to their gods; and they were skilled in sculpture, metal-casting, engraving, and the art of inlaying both with metal and with stone. They invented a system of writing with wedge-shaped characters, the cuneiform, which their conquerors in a later age adopted and made the current script of their world. As one city and then another rose to preëminence, at length Lugalzaggisi,

king of Erech, won for his domain the overlordship of all Sumer; and beyond that, as he celebrates in an inscription, his god Enlil gave him "the kingdom of the world" and "made straight his path from the Lower Sea of the Tigris and Euphrates to the Upper Sea" — from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. Thus early were the ways opened that led to the coastland of the West.

North of Sumer lay the territory of Akkad, now peopled by Semites. Thence conquering the entire plain, they founded the Babylonian Empire. With their advance southward, they absorbed the Sumerian people, and turned to their own uses important elements of the earlier civilization. To this fusion of races originally distinct may be due in large measure the high development and world-compelling influence of Babylonian culture.

In the rise of the great Semitic empire which at length spread its dominion from the Tigris to the Nile, the first name to stand out pre-eminent is that of Sharrukin or Sargon I, king of Agade, coupled with that of a successor whom later chroniclers called his son, Naram-Sin (2800–2700). Sargon gave imperial scope to the group of valley kingdoms. His conquests, supplemented by those of Naram-Sin, extended into Elam across the Tigris, to Armenia in the north, and to the shore of the Mediterranean. The sovereignty, however, passed from Sargon's line to other cities successively. As the warrior is followed by the trader, the craftsman, and the colonist, so the march of Sargon's armies pointed the way for the commerce of Gudea, prince of Shipurla, or Lagash (2450), who brought from far distant countries stone, metals, and rare woods for the building of palaces and temples. From the rise of Sumer, revealed to history early in the fourth millennium, to the fall of Babylon at the attack of the Persian Cyrus, in 538 B.C., this reaching out of the East toward the West for military conquest and trade inspires the ambitions

of the kingdoms and empires that flourished and declined in the Euphrates valley for more than three thousand years.

Not long after 2500, the supremacy of the now native Semitic kings was broken by invaders from Elam, who had in their own right achieved a civilization in their mountain home. Issuing thence, they descended upon Babylonia, plundering as they came, and they finally established themselves in the plains which the Semites had made their own. Meanwhile the Arabian desert had stirred mightily again, and pushed forth hordes of virile but hungering tribes. Some, westward, drifted into Canaan, merging there with a people whose ancestors were likewise sprung from the wastes. Others poured into Mesopotamia, and beyond, into Babylonia. Founding a powerful dynasty in Babylon, these western Semites drove the Elamites from the country, and made their capital the sovereign city of the Empire.

Sixth king of the new line was Hammurabi (2100), whose reign distinguished him less as a world-conqueror than as an administrator and law-giver. The scattered forces of the Empire he gathered once more into unity, under the supremacy of his city of Babylon. Concerned chiefly for social and economic welfare, he built greatly; and by an immense system of canals, he ensured the fertility of the land, the real basis of the national prosperity. The supreme witness to his genius is his "Code." Embracing some three hundred laws which deal with property rights, business transactions, slavery, and all family and social relations, the Code expresses a ripe and highly ordered civilization. The principles underlying its enactments must have influenced the Law of Israel which began to take form a millennium later, for the parallels are too close to be merely accidental. Flood-tide of merited felicity at home and streaming influence abroad, the reign of Hammurabi was the golden age of Babylon.

Then followed a period of about four hundred years ruled by kings of Hammurabi's line or race. Documents of this epoch indicate a time of comparative peace. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century, the land was invaded by tribes from the mountains east of the Tigris. The Kassites, making themselves masters of the country, established a dynasty which governed for six hundred years. The thread of ancient Babylonian tradition, however, was not completely broken, for the mountaineers became assimilated to the older civilization. But under the Kassite sovereignty, the Empire lost its commanding position; and in the West, its influence yielded to the conquering march of Egypt under its Eighteenth Dynasty. For the moment, the glory of Babylon is in eclipse. When again the Empire emerges as a figure of the great drama, it is subordinate to Assyria. By that time, Israel is at home in Canaan.

The dwellers in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, who thus achieved imperial dominion, were less a military than an agricultural and commercial people. The wars which the city-states waged among themselves and the foreign conquests of the Empire in its long history were undertaken, not as later by Assyria with cruel lust of aggrandizement, but rather in the interests of trade. Kings gained their ambitious ends less by force than by diplomacy. Babylon's weapon was her merchandise; and culture followed in her train. Her caravans, laden with the produce of richly fertile field and busy shop, trafficked with Mesopotamia and the Westland, and crossed by desert ways to Egypt; with the fine work of weavers and jewellers fared also precious lore. From the east, by land or sea, her traders brought back cotton and ivory from India; and the waters of great rivers bore her commerce throughout the length of the Empire. In the centuries of her splendor, Babylon was the world's market-place and the radiant centre of learning. When the proud imperial

city bowed to more militant states, she imposed her erudite and sumptuous culture upon her conquerors.

This civilization, in its beginnings older than history, attained extreme complexity. Society was divided into distinct classes, from the king, the nobles, and the priests, through the merchant middle class, to the artisans, the tenant farmers, the free laborers, and the slaves. The status of each class was defined, and its rights were safeguarded, by enactment. Women occupied a quite independent place, recognized in law; they could own and transfer property and engage in trade. Immense numbers of contract tablets attest the extent to which business and industry were developed, and the minuteness with which the details of daily intercourse were regulated.

In great artistic achievement the Babylonians were not the equals of the Egyptians. They lacked the materials for the colossal stonework in building and sculpture that distinguished the art of Egypt. Their alluvial plain supplied only clay; the stone they used was transported from far distances. Forced mainly to employ brick, yet with this medium they created wonderful effects in their lofty staged towers, which served as shrines, and their magnificent temples and palaces. The Hebrew narrator conceived the Tower of Babel rightly: "They had brick for stone, and bitumen had they for mortar. And they said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven." In the minor arts the people of the Euphrates yielded nothing to their contemporaries of the Nile. The outer walls of their great buildings were embellished with gloriously colored enamels of exquisite and imperishable texture. Skilled in the carving of ivory, the Babylonians were masters also of the art of gem-cutting, in the production of personal ornaments and especially of seals, whose use was universal. The Eastern Empire was famous throughout the world for its textiles, notably of wool;

among the spoils of Jericho, pillaged by the Israelites, was a "goodly Babylonish mantle." The craft of the weaver was enriched by the art of the embroiderer in the fashioning of a thing of price. Equally, the goldsmith, the joiner, and the worker in leather were celebrated for the finished beauty of their handiwork. Remains of Babylonian craftsmanship that have outlasted the ravage of war and time bear witness to the luxury exacted by this consummate civilization.

The art of writing had been early won in the Euphrates valley; and documents have been unearthed which carry the records far back into the fourth millennium. By the time of Hammurabi an immense literature had come to flower. A group of narratives, in essence nature-myths, dealing with the creation of the world, rose out of an antiquity beyond the trace of historical research; in the renascence of culture under Hammurabi, they were collected, recast, and combined into a consistent whole. In their final form, of about one thousand lines, they compose the "Creation Epic" which supplies remarkable parallels with the first chapter of Genesis. Of even greater significance for Babylonian culture is the epic of Gilgamesh, in twelve books; the account of the Deluge, given in the eleventh tablet, is the prototype of the Hebrew narrative of the Flood. The brief story of the goddess Ishtar's descent into the underworld of the dead to restore the lost Tammuz, her brother and husband, is the Babylonian version of the myth of Venus and Adonis. Other myths and legends which have been recovered in part are the story of Adapa, the first man, who fails of immortality; and the legend of Sargon the Great, who like Moses is exposed as an infant in a basket of reeds on the river; rescued by a peasant, he is beloved of Ishtar, and finally becomes king. These epics show a high degree of narrative skill and an accomplished poetic form. Of equal literary quality are hymns to the gods and penitential psalms. Many of the psalms,

in beauty of imagery, in moral insight and religious fervor, are not unworthy to be compared with the Hebrew Psalter.

In science and its practical application, the Babylonians were pioneers. They devised a numerical system on both the decimal and sexagesimal basis; they divided the circle into 360 degrees, with subdivision of 60 minutes. Their method of reckoning time furnished the pattern of the modern calendar. With a profound and exact knowledge of the stars, though turned to the practice of astrology, they laid a foundation for a true science of astronomy. Not only were the Babylonians the leaders and teachers of their contemporary world; modern civilization as well, by way of Greece and Rome, stands vastly in their debt.

But the dominant concern of their existence was religion. Among the Sumerians, primitive animism had already given birth to gods. Each city had its chief patron deity, attended by groups of lesser divinities. When the Semitic nomads poured into the valley in successive waves, they brought with them their own tribal conceptions and usages. The influence of the established religion persisted, however, for the newcomers did not destroy the older culture but transformed it. The attributes and functions of the various gods remained virtually the same, though they underwent amplification with unfolding time. But the names identified with these attributes were changed, according as one god or another, through the victory of his worshippers, asserted his preëminence. Thus for example, Ea of Eridu and Enlil of Nippur ceded their place and powers to Marduk of Babylon.

In the development of Babylonian religion, two forces were active — on the one hand, the popular beliefs and superstitions, survivals of an earlier stage of culture, but none the less operative, and on the other hand, the official theological doctrines promulgated by the

priests. Official religion glorified the supreme god, Marduk, and rendered appropriate homage to the lesser figures of the pantheon. Concurrently, the pure worship of the gods was alloyed with the practice of an elaborate ritual of magic. The favor of the gods, if haply it were won, might be thwarted by the malign activity of demons. These evil spirits were to be exorcised by incantations recited by the priests. A considerable part of Babylonian literature consists of incantation texts; and the whole religious praxis takes color from this lower order of beliefs.

In its higher forms, Babylonian religion approached, without quite reaching, the conception of monotheism. The great gods, differentiated, as civilization matured, from the hosts of demons, originally personified the forces of nature. As reflection deepened, they were endowed with a more and more distinctive character. The cities of the plain identified their gods with the sun and moon and stars, with storms and waters and reproductive powers. These divinities were worshipped at the several centres under different names; and each centre had its own pantheon. When the city of Babylon rose to sovereignty among the valley kindgoms, its chief god, Marduk, in the beginning a solar figure, became the supreme god, source of light and wisdom and justice. But not the only god; for by his side lesser deities continued to receive their due worship. But though the Babylonians failed to attain true monotheism, their religion served as the inspiration of ethical ideals. Babylonia preceded Israel by a millennium. The religions of the two peoples were akin. The point of contact lay in Canaan.

When Hammurabi was king in Babylon, Canaan was a small, far-outlying province of the Empire. Conditions of life in the little country, about 2000 B.C., are reflected in an Egyptian romance from

the period of the Twelfth Dynasty. Sinuhe, a nobleman at the court of the Pharaoh, so the story runs, believing his life to be in danger, flees from Egypt. Coming to the Wall of the Princes, which defended the Nile kingdom against the inroads of hostile bands, he succeeds in eluding the guards posted there. Once across the frontier, he reaches the desert; and here he is befriended by the sheikh of a tribe of "sand-wanderers" whom he had known in Egypt. Passing from one tribe to another, he makes his way to the country east of the Dead Sea. After a stay of a year and a half, he is finally invited to the court of a king in the north of Canaan, who has heard from other Egyptian refugees resident with him of the exploits of Sinuhe. The story continues:

The chief preferred me before his children, giving me his eldest daughter in marriage. . . . It is an excellent land. Figs are there and grapes; wine is more plentiful than water; honey abounds in it; numerous are its olives and all the products of its trees; there are barley and wheat without end, and cattle of all kinds. . . . I had daily rations of bread and wine, day by day; cooked meat and roasted fowl, besides the mountain game which I took. . . . Much butter was made for me, and milk prepared in every kind of way. There I passed many years; and the children which were born to me became strong men, each ruling his own tribe. . . . I did kindness to all: I gave water to the thirsty, I set again upon his way the traveller who had been stopped on it, I chastised the brigand. . . . When I went forth to war, all the countries toward which I set out trembled in their pastures by their wells. I seized their cattle, I took away their vassals and carried off their slaves, I slew the inhabitants with my sword and my bow.

A kind of primal feudalism, therefore, gave to Canaan such organization and security as the troubled country was able to achieve. The meeting-ground of nations, Canaan was but a territory divided against itself. In an Egyptian document deriving from the Middle Kingdom (2100–1700), it is written concerning the Canaanite bar-

barian, "He conquers not, nor yet is he conquered." A permanent union of its divers peoples, however expedient on occasion against enemies from without, was physically impossible, for its habitable regions were separated by the barriers of its mountain ranges. So Israel proved it by fateful experience. The land was strewn with cities, governed by prince or chieftain, each independent of the others; though all in common may have submitted to the suzerainty of Babylonia or Egypt. Set each upon a hill, the cities were strongly defended by walls and towers; the neighboring villages, home of the farmer folk, were "daughters" of the mother-city, to which they looked in time of raid by marauders or the assault of invading armies. From an early age, necessity had taught the Canaanites the art of fortress-building. So the Hebrews pressing in across the Jordan found before them "cities fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; besides the unwalled towns a great many." Stout defences and instant readiness for war were the price of the fruits of industry and of uncertain peace. The local prince, nested in his citadel, commanded the swords of his nobles; smiths in bronze furnished him for war; jewellers working with gold, silver, ivory and alabaster, ministered to the luxury of his court; potters, weavers, and builders in clay and stone, supplied the needs of his people. Traders brought wealth to his city; and his peasantry gathered a varied harvest of grains, olives, figs and grapes. But constant turmoil made the zest of life. Rival princes, ambitious of greater power and wealth, coveted one another's lands, and took them when they could, smiting the conquered citizens to death. The desert launched its swift-moving bands of hungry tribes, who swept away with them the cattle and the harvests. Then there were always passing caravans to be plundered, which yielded precious wrought work from Babylonia and gold from Egypt. In turn the wealth of Canaan and the plenty

of its plains were the spoil of conquering mighty armies from the east and from the south. There was no king of the land, and "every man did what was right in his own eyes." Thus it was in Israel in the time of the Judges, and thus it had been for a thousand years.

When the Semitic Empire of Babylonia, in the eighteenth century, fell before the incursions of the Kassite mountaineers from beyond the Tigris, its grasp of the Westland was loosened. Although the influence of its culture persisted in Canaan, the Eastern Empire ceded its political and commercial supremacy there to Egypt. With the expulsion of the Hyksos from the Nile valley, about 1580, the Eighteenth Dynasty at Thebes rose to magnificence and dominion. The Shepherd Kings, retreating through Canaan to the Orontes river in the north, drew after them the pursuit of the victorious Egyptians. Thus the way was opened to successive Pharaohs of the new Dynasty to extend their conquests and reap vast spoils. After a series of raiding expeditions across Canaan as far as the Euphrates in the course of a century, it fell to the great Thutmose III to bring the country under the powerful suzerainty of Egypt. By fifteen campaigns in nineteen years, he broke utterly such resistance as the petty princes were able to marshal against the trained legions of the Empire. The cities, strongly fortified, more than once compelled the Pharaoh to lay siege. But their mutual jealousies and the difficult character of the country prevented effective union for defence against the invader. Thutmose's conquest was complete. The rulers of the little city-states were appointed by the Pharaoh's command, sons and brothers of the princes were taken to Egypt as hostages, garrisons of imperial troops were quartered in the cities, and as vassals all the petty kingdoms sent yearly tribute to Thebes. In their rivalries and feuds among themselves, the Pharaoh played off one prince against another to their further weakness and his own advantage. Though the cities

maintained the show of independence, the land became politically a province of the Empire; and commercially it was a wholly Egyptian sphere of influence.

The abounding plains and wealthy cities of Canaan invited plunder by an ambitious and luxurious state like Egypt under the Eighteenth Dynasty. The annals of Thutmose, recounting his triumphs, celebrate repeatedly the extraordinary opulence of the country. During one campaign the soldiers every day caroused and anointed themselves with oil as on feast days in Egypt. At the battle of Megiddo, the Egyptians routed their enemies, who fled to the defences of the city, leaving behind them their horses and their gold and silver chariots. Two of the native kings escaped altogether, for the Egyptian troops, instead of following up the pursuit, turned greedily to the spoil. The fugitives from the battle-field found safety within the city walls. "While they were being drawn up by their clothes from without into this town," recites the chiselled chronicle, "oh that the warriors of the King had not yielded to their desire to plunder the goods of the enemy!" After the final capitulation of Megiddo, the chiefs of the land came to the Pharaoh with "tribute of silver, of gold, of lapis lazuli and malachite, bringing grain, wine, oil, and flocks for the army of his Majesty; and they sent the foreign workmen who were among them with the tribute southwards. His Majesty appointed chiefs anew."

The spoils ravished by Thutmose's armies in Canaan and the north were of incredible quantity and amazing variety. The jubilant enthusiasm of the royal scribe conjures visions of fabulous wealth and unimaginable splendor. "There were found wines abundant in their wine-presses, as water flows down; their grain was on the threshing-floors more abundant than the sand on the shore." Besides the natural products of the land, honey, oil, incense, fruits, and choice

woods, "more abundant than anything known to the soldiers of his Majesty, without exaggeration," there were precious stones, lapis lazuli, malachite, and alabaster, and all metals. Cattle and flocks were in similar measure; the spoils of Megiddo alone included 2041 mares, 191 fillies, 1929 bulls, 2000 small goats, 20,500 sheep. "One does not reckon the wild fowl of that country." Of booty and tribute in the wrought work of the craftsman there was a corresponding treasure. In the lists of Thutmose are mentioned chariots plated or inlaid with gold, silver, and colors; suits of bronze armor inlaid with gold; beautifully fashioned dishes of gold, silver, bronze, and copper; caldrons, great jars, and vases for drinking; gold and silver rings; a silver statue, the head of gold; large tables of ivory and kharub wood, inlaid with gold and all precious stones; chairs and footstools of similar opulent workmanship; tent poles splendidly decorated; spears, shields, and bows; personal ornaments in rare metals, set with gems. The luxury of the nobles of Samaria which the Israelite prophets denounced scornfully was not new in Canaan. The wealth of the land may be measured by the scale of the Pharaoh's operations. The Egyptian army numbered probably not more than fifteen, or at most twenty, thousand. In eleven campaigns were taken 7548 captives and slaves; about four hundred were nobles. The lists of Thutmose name one hundred nineteen cities and towns in the conquered territory. Since much of the country is mountainous and barren, the number and the wealth of cities in Syria and Canaan indicate the intensive character of Canaanite civilization.

Intercourse between Egypt and the Coastland, however, was not limited to military conquest. Trade overland and by sea was constant and varied, enriching life in both countries. Phœnician ships and merchant caravans brought to markets on the Nile "slaves destined for the workshop or the harem, Hittite bulls and stallions, horses

from Singar, oxen from Alasia, rare and curious animals such as elephants from Nii, and brown bears from the Lebanon, smoked and salted fish, live birds of many-colored plumage, goldsmiths' work and precious stones, wood for building or for ornamental work — pine, cypress, yew, cedar, and oak, musical instruments, helmets, leathern jerkins covered with metal scales, weapons of bronze and iron, chariots, dyed and embroidered stuffs, perfumes, dried cakes, oil, wines, liqueurs, and beer." [1] The result of the close contact between the two countries was a rapid and profound change in Egyptian ways. At this period Canaan was not inferior to Egypt in the arts of life. The little land of city-states, giving more than it received, imposed something of its culture and racial character upon the Empire. In reciprocal influence, the accomplishment and pattern of Canaan for the moment were the stronger.

During the reigns of the next two Pharaohs, conditions in Canaan remained as Thutmose III had established them. An occasional raid or punitive expedition, bringing more spoils to Egypt, served also to secure the tribute due the Empire and to hold the vassal princes to their allegiance. Amenhotep III, who followed now upon the throne, was able to administer the home affairs of his mighty state and to enrich the land with grandiose monuments, undisturbed by rebellions in the Northland. His reign and that of his son, Amenhotep IV, in their relations to Canaan and the eastern world, are brought into sharp actuality by the correspondence inscribed on clay tablets discovered at Tell-el-Amarna.

The story of Sinuhe, delightful romance in the ancient manner, illumines with the vividness of things seen the troubled darkness of uttermost years. The Amarna letters, more than five centuries later, authentic contemporary documents of their period, have all the

[1] Maspero: *The Struggle of the Nations*, p. 284.

fascination of romance. Even the circumstances of their discovery quicken imagination and emotion, blending a stroke of sudden good fortune with the tragic regret of an irreparable loss. An Egyptian peasant-woman, fumbling in the dust of the ruined capital of the heretic King Ikhnaton — Amenhotep IV — chanced upon some tablets of baked clay, impressed upon both sides with outlandish characters. The find led to renewed search by peasants, who knew that old things dug from the soil of Egypt bring a price. The tablets thus unearthed passed from hand to hand, suffering grievous breakage in transmission, some in sacks being ground to powder, before their significance was recognized. Altogether about three hundred fifty tablets and fragments were recovered. They proved to be for the most part a collection of letters sent to Egypt during the reigns of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV (1411–1358), and deposited in the royal archives of the new capital Akhetaton, the modern Tell-el-Amarna.

The tablets open vistas of a wide and busy world. Kings of Babylonia, of Assyria, of Mitanni (northern Mesopotamia), of Alasia (Cyprus or the mainland opposite), and of the Hittite land write to their "Brother" of Egypt. In turn several letters, original or in copy, retained in the archives, were from the Pharaoh himself. Vassal princes of Amurru (Syria) and Canaan communicate with their great overlord in terms of ostentatious utter servility. Some of the letters of the subject chieftains are addressed to Egyptian officers at the court or stationed in the province. Others were exchanged among the princes themselves. A few letters are from women. It is probable that communication between nations, of which the Amarna tablets are a salient instance, was not limited to this period. Letters from the kings refer to relations with Egypt which had existed in the time of their fathers and before; and presumably intercourse continued after

the death of Amenhotep IV. For the countries of this eager stirring world were closely linked by ties of self-interest and mutual advantage. Official scribes were maintained at court, versed in all the technique of diplomatic correspondence; and couriers passed to and fro with such regularity as occasion demanded and dangers of the road allowed. The highway of this intercourse lay through Canaan.

The entire correspondence, with one or two exceptions, is written in the Babylonian language, employing the cuneiform script. In certain of the letters, Babylonian words are explained by glosses in Canaanite forms, or again by an Egyptian equivalent. Among the tablets also are practice exercises which served to aid the scribe in learning this international language of diplomacy and trade. For models, the scribe had before him on cuneiform tablets, versions of Babylonian myths. The language of Mitanni and that of the Hittites, as well as of Egypt, were non-Semitic; the speech of Syria and Canaan, though cognate with the Babylonian, was yet different from it. That all the nations in common, for purposes of intercourse with one another, and the princes of Canaan among themselves, used the Babylonian language, which was foreign to themselves, witnesses to the spread and power of Babylon's influence, though political dominance in world affairs at that epoch rested with Egypt.

The letters from independent kings disclose intimate glimpses of life as it was in those old splendor-loving days. Some are concerned with intermarriages between the royal and the imperial houses. It was not unusual for the Pharaoh to take foreign princesses to wife. Amenhotep III had married the sister of the king of Babylonia; and he writes now asking for the hand of his daughter. In reply to a request from his Brother of Babylon for an Egyptian princess, the Pharaoh says haughtily, but not truly, "The daughter of the King of the land of Egypt has never been given to anybody." Whereupon

the Babylonian monarch, duly humbled, asks for some one of the beautiful women of Egypt, remarking deliciously, "Who here shall say she is not a daughter of the King!" In all these letters from foreign potentates there is much discussion back and forth regarding "gifts," which in less royal terms would seem to have been exchange and barter. In return for wives and slaves and native products and handiwork, the kings ask the Pharaoh for gold. One is building a temple, and another a palace; and they need gold to complete the work. Often there is complaint about the amount and the quality of the gold sent from Egypt. One gift — when melted in the furnace! — proved to be scandalously underweight; and the injured king begs that the Pharaoh personally shall supervise the sealing of the packet, instead of entrusting it to an official whose honesty may fairly be questioned. The king of Mitanni protests through several letters, as though chanting a refrain, that the images of gold promised by the Pharaoh turned out on arrival to have been made of wood. Though the Pharaoh and his distant correspondents were not always in agreement, however, the amenities of their royal relationships were not neglected. Messages of congratulation or condolence passed between them, appropriate to the occasion. When Amenhotep III was sick unto death, the king of Mitanni sent him a statue of his goddess Ishtar of Nineveh, in the hope that she might bring healing to the aged Pharaoh, a hope that was not realized. The king of Alasia, writing that the hand of Nergal is upon his land, afflicting it with pestilence, asks that an "eagle-sorcerer" may be sent from Egypt. To find a home in Cyprus, Nergal, the Babylonian god of the dead, had travelled far.

Intercourse between Egypt and distant nations, as may be fancied, was attended with risks and difficulties. Once a princess sent to the Pharaoh was accompanied by an escort of three thousand

men. The king of Babylonia, to excuse the smallness of his present of four minas of lapis lazuli and five spans of horses, urges justly that the road is dangerous, the water scarce, and the heat great. Often caravans were set upon by marauding tribes of the desert or by robber chieftains of Syria: one king, whose caravans had been thus plundered, insists that the Pharaoh shall indemnify him for the loss, since the outrage occurred in territory subject to Egypt. But despite all difficulties of intercourse, the crafty Oriental monarchs, with watchful and jealous eye, kept themselves informed of the doings of rival petitioners for the favor of the mighty lord of the West. The king of Babylonia complains to the Pharaoh: "Now Assyrians, who are my vassals, I have not sent to thee, as they themselves have reported. Wherefore are they come to thy land? If thou lovest me, let them not have dealings with thee. With empty hands let them return hither." Across distance and perils thus diplomacy spun its intricate web, when the Hebrews were still nomad shepherds.

The letters of the princes of Syria and Canaan tell a different story. As vassals to their overlord, the chieftains write to the Pharaoh, protesting their own loyalty and accusing their enemies of rebellion against Egypt and wanton aggression against themselves. Since the conquest of the Northland by Thutmose III, a century earlier, the cities of the province had remained tributary to the Empire under military compulsion. Amenhotep IV, mystic and prophet of a new religion, was engaged at home in a bitter conflict with the established priesthood of the ancient traditional Amon-worship. Apparently he made no effort, even had he been inclined, to maintain control over the rampant chieftains of his northern province. The cities of the coast and of the plains would willingly have continued their allegiance to the Pharaoh, in the interests of their trade and for the security provided them by Egyptian garrisons. The status of

the loyal cities is illustrated in a letter from the ruler of Katna to Amenhotep III. "Since my fathers were numbered among thy servants, is this land thy land, is Katna thy city, and I belong to my lord. O, my lord, when the warriors and the chariots of my lord came, food, strong drink, cattle, honey, and oil were brought before the warriors and chariots of my lord." The rulers of the hill towns, on the contrary, freer by nature, had less to lose and more to gain by a return to the old anarchy which afforded license to plunder and allowed opportunity for the strong to wrest new territory from richer but less warlike cities. In the general uproar they were quick to avail themselves of support from beyond their own borders. Already in the reign of Amenhotep III, the king of far-off Babylon had been sounded by certain Canaanite princes who hoped, though in vain, to enlist his aid in an uprising against Egypt. So, seven centuries later, Israel and Judah intrigued in their world. The king of Mitanni seems to have mixed in the turmoil. The Hittites in force were pressing down from the north; and with these militant adventurers the rebel native chieftains allied themselves for predatory war. Bands from the desert, the Sa-Gaz and the Khabiru, ranged the country, plundering on their own account or entering the paid service of the princes. Thus were the Hebrews breaking in upon Canaan. Meanwhile the Pharaoh was building a new capital city and inditing hymns to his god Aton.

Some seventy or eighty vassal princes despatched tablets to the Egyptian court. The outstanding figures of the revolt in Syria are Rib-addi, loyal governor of Gubla (Byblos), and the rebel chieftain Abd-ashirta and his son Aziru, lords of Amurru. The letters of Rib-addi, fifty-four to the Pharaoh, six to Amanappa, Egyptian general, and four to other officials, are typical of the Amarna correspondence as a whole. Out of the trepidation of immediate events, he writes with a passionate directness that recreates the crowded troublous

scene. Formerly, he says, "at the sight of a man from Egypt, the kings of Canaan fled before him; but behold, the sons of Abd-ashirta fright away the people from Egypt, and with bloody weapons have they threatened me." His city is besieged by ships; for Aziru, having conquered other cities of the coast, impressed their ships into his own service and turned them against Gubla. The Shirdani, Egyptian auxiliaries (from Sardinia or Sardis in Lydia?), have been killed by the Suti, robber bands in the pay of his enemies. The Hittites too are ravaging the land. Again and again he appeals to the Pharaoh to send troops, fifty pairs of horses and two hundred foot-soldiers, or another time, four hundred troops and thirty pairs of horses; he begs for grain and for ships. But no help comes. His foes are more powerful than he, and his plight is desperate.

My fields are like a woman without a husband, for lack of sowing. All my cities in the mountains and on the plains of the sea-coast have gone over to the Sa-Gaz. Only Gubla, with two other cities, remains to me. . . . Like a bird caught in a snare, so am I in Gubla. What shall I do in my isolation? Lo, I think on it day and night. . . . I have written to the Court, and thou hast sent no answer. . . . Nine times have I been wounded, and I fear for my life. . . . The people of Gubla and my house and my wife said to me, Go hence to the son of Abd-ashirta, and let us make peace between us. But I heeded them not. . . . I am old, and my body is racked with pain.

Then the letters cease. Rib-addi was but one among many rulers of cities, though his letters happen to be the most numerous. The faithful vassals, relying vainly on the armed support of the Empire, were swept into the power of the rebellious chieftains. In the press of hostile peoples crowding into the land and amid the feuds of native princes, each city or group maintained itself according to the measure of its force.

In Canaan raged a similar tumult. Though the country, lying

nearer to Egypt, was held in somewhat firmer control than Syria, yet the letters from the local princes utter the same vehement protestations of fidelity to the great King, mingled with the call for help against rival chiefs and the invading Khabiru. The ruler of Kelte (Keilah) complains that thirty cities are leagued against him. The uprising was general, complicated further by the inroads of desert bands. Among the cities afterwards significant in Israelite history which sent tablets to the Pharaoh were Aijalon, Lachish, Gezer, Megiddo, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Jerusalem. The important city of Shechem is mentioned once, but no letter seems to have come from this place famous in Israel. Were the Hebrews, as the story of Simeon and Levi might imply, already in possession?

The Canaanite ruler who suffered most from the forays of the Khabiru was Abd-khiba, the King's officer in Jerusalem. Like Rib-addi in the north, he sought to maintain the imperial authority against great odds. Though his enemies slandered him before the King, his loyalty ought not to be questioned. "Lo, I am not a [native but now vassal] prince; an officer [or deputy] am I of the King, my lord. Behold, not my father nor my mother hath set me in this place. The powerful hand of the King hath established me in the house of my father." Duly he pays tribute, and he sends gifts to the Pharaoh. But his foes are become mighty against him; all the princes have rebelled against Egypt, and the Khabiru are ravaging all the lands of the King. In several letters he adds a postscript addressed to the imperial scribe, bespeaking his gracious attention that he bring the purport of the letter to the particular notice of the King, his lord. Perhaps the evil case of his city was not so utterly hopeless as he sought to paint it, for Jerusalem was the last of the fortified cities of Canaan to fall before the slow, hard-fought conquest of the land by Israel. Once, with a note of special emphasis in his appeal,

Abd-khiba exclaims, "Behold, the King hath set his name upon Jerusalem for ever!" — a prophecy which events were signally to annul. Anciently in Canaan, strife was every man's portion, and quick vicissitudes made the history of the land.

In the colored, turbulent world revealed in its length and breadth by the Amarna letters, Israel a few centuries later played an active but never dominant part.

The Amarna correspondence preceded the earliest literature of Israel by several hundred years. Yet the style of these letters from kindred peoples, writing a cognate language, is significant in its affinity with the Hebrew genius. Israel had not wholly to create the medium in which it worked supremely. The newcomers from the desert, possessing themselves of Canaan by gradual occupation, entered into a ripe civilization won by an elder people of their own stock. The culture to which Israel thus fell heir finds an expression in the few precious documents of a period which accident has restored in its immediate actuality. The Amarna letters are instinct with the spirit of their age and race.

The potentates of the ancient East were masters of elaborate courtesy and ceremonious phrase. With the proud deference and circumstantial greeting that one king renders to a brother monarch on occasions of state, the Pharaoh writes to the king of Babylon:

> To Kadashman-kharbe, King of Karaduniash,
> my brother, thus speaks Nibmuaria, the great King,
> King of Egypt, thy brother: With me it is well
> With thee may it be well! With thy house, thy wives,
> Thy children, thy nobles, thy horses,
> Thy chariots, in the midst of thy lands may it in high degree be well!
> With me it is well, with my house, my wives, my children,
> my nobles, my horses, my chariots,
> the warriors in hosts, it is well, and in the midst of my lands it is in
> high degree well.

Whereupon the Pharaoh proceeds with all directness to the business in hand. The plenitude of repetitious phrase would seem to indicate that the mechanical technique of writing offered no difficulties. As befits one of humbler station addressing his lord, a vassal prince writes to the Pharaoh thus:

> To the King, my lord, my gods,
> my sun, the sun of
> Heaven, thus spoke Yapakhi,
> the man of Gazri,
> thy servant, the dust of thy feet,
> the servant of thy horses:
> At the two feet of the King, my lord,
> my gods, my sun, the sun
> of Heaven, I fell down seven times
> and seven times indeed
> with belly and back.
> I have heard the words
> of the messenger of the King,
> my lord, verily, verily.

Though this formula of address was the conventional mode of greeting, employed — with individual variations — in most of the letters from the vassal princes, its rhetorical flourish is not without a kind of eloquence. Sometimes the writer, carried beyond the routine phrase and matter of fact by the earnestness of his feeling, rises to a strain of poetry: "Whether we ascend into Heaven, or go down into earth, our head is in thy hands." Similarly, another anticipates the figurative imagination of the Hebrew scriptures:

> Behold, I am thy servant, true to the King, my lord. I look on one side, and I look on the other side, and there is no light; but I look on the King, my lord, and there is light. A brick may be taken out of its place, but I shall not move from under the feet of my lord. . . . The yoke of my lord is on my neck, and I bear it.

A still higher flight essays Abimilki of Tyre. Addressing the Pharaoh Ikhnaton, who at the cost of empire was establishing in his new capital the sole worship of the sun's disc, the writer pays the great King a subtilely calculated homage by his adroit play with imagery of the sun.

I am the dust from under the sandals of the King, my lord. My lord is the sun, who riseth over the lands day by day, according to the will of the sun, his gracious father. He it is who giveth life, and returneth after his vanishing, who bringeth the whole land to rest by the might of his hand, who thundereth in the heavens like Adad, so that the whole earth trembleth at his thundering. . . . On my breast, on my back, I bear the word of the King, my lord. Whoso hearkeneth to the King, his lord, and serveth him in his place, upon him the sun riseth, and there cometh good from the mouth of his lord. But if he heareth not the word of the King, his lord, then falleth his city, falleth his house; his name is not in the whole land forever. Behold the servant who hearkeneth to his lord! Well is it with his city, well with his house; his name endureth eternally. Thou art the sun, which riseth upon me, and a wall of bronze established for me.

It was centuries yet before the literature of Israel came to flower, but these passages are not foreign to Hebrew style in its splendid maturity. Three hundred years after the Amarna period, invading Israel fought against the kings of Canaan and overcame Sisera. The swelling periods and conscious imagery of the earlier princes' letters contrast strangely with Deborah's wild song of battle and fierce triumph.

Canaan, lost to Egypt by Amenhotep IV and his feeble successors of the Eighteenth Dynasty, among whom was Tut-ankh-amen, was recovered in part by the Pharaohs of the Nineteenth Dynasty. The withdrawal of Egyptian power from the province had left the way open to the aggressive Hittites, who established themselves in the

north by alliance with the Amorite cities, and even penetrated to southern Canaan. Indeed, remembrance of them survived in the traditions of Israel. After sixteen years of varying conflict on Syrian ground with these formidable enemies, Ramses II, fourth Pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty, and the Hittite king, in 1271, made a treaty, incised on a silver tablet in the Babylonian language and script, defining their reciprocal obligations. But Egypt had yet to contend with the Hittites for nearly a hundred years. Meanwhile the march and countermarch of hostile armies across Canaan allowed the long-troubled land no peace. The cities, unable to maintain themselves independently, accepted the control of Egypt or of the Hittites as advantage seemed to offer, but ever ready for a turn of fortune or new war. Commercial intercourse and exchange of culture, however, between Egypt and the Northland continued as of old. Out of the general ceaseless unrest of Canaan, many of the more enterprising or less warlike spirits had for generations sought opportunity or quiet in Egypt; and there some rose to position in the state. Such a one was Joseph, in the proud traditions of Israel; and like the ancestral Hebrews, wandering tribes in a time of famine in Canaan pushed on to the Delta, and were permitted there to graze their flocks within the border of the Empire.

In the reign of Merneptah, successor of Ramses II, Canaan again broke into revolt, and again was compelled to acknowledge the authority of Egypt. Constantly too, as the annals of the Nineteenth Dynasty attest, bands of marauders from the desert were loosed upon the coastland in numbers ever renewed. As in the Amarna period the Sa-Gaz and the Khabiru secured a footing in Canaan, so now a century and a half later, Hebrew tribes seem to have established themselves in definitive occupation. But Canaan and Syria had yet to suffer another great invasion. The island peoples of

the Western Sea, always venturesome in their ships, were beginning to move in force against the mainland to the east and south. Bringing with them their wives and children and all their goods, they aimed to possess themselves permanently of the rich territories of the coast. An inscription of Ramses III narrates:

The Isles were restless, disturbed among themselves at one and the same time. No land stood before them, beginning from Kheta (Hittite land), Kedi (Cilicia), Carchemish, Arvad, and Alasia. They destroyed [them and assembled in their] camp in one place in the midst of Amor (Amurru). They desolated its people and its land like that which is not. They came with fire prepared before them, forward towards Egypt. Their main strength was [composed of] Pulesti, Tjakaray, Shalalsha, Daanau, and Uashasha. These lands were united, and they laid their hands upon the land as far as the Circle of the Earth.

The invaders overcame the Hittites, and advancing into Canaan, they threatened Egypt. Ramses III, with a war fleet and an army, defeated them in a great battle. Though turned back from Egypt, they were not utterly routed. Among them, the Pulesti effected a settlement on the shore of Canaan. There gradually reënforced by later arrivals of their kinsmen, they founded the confederacy of cities which Israel came to know as the kingdom of the Philistines. After some centuries of militant independence, a check to the growth of Israelite power, they virtually disappeared. The country which they occupied but could not wholly conquer keeps their memory alive in its name, Palestine. At the moment these invaders from the sea were striking at the coast, the tribes of Israel, delivered out of Egypt, were pressing in from the south and east on Canaan.

The millennial perplexed history of Canaan is reflected in the

quality and the character of its civilization. The culture of this land of checkered fortunes, though mature and elaborate, bore no single distinctive impress. It was the blended result of multifarious influences from without, from Babylonia, from Egypt, doubtless in some measure from the Hittites, also from the Mycenean-Ægean world by way of Phœnicia, and later when Israel was entering the land, by the mediation of the Philistines. Canaan absorbed with an immense power of assimilation. It could not create. No great national art like that of the two mighty Empires was possible to this little country of many peoples. The geographical and political conditions which prevented the fusion of its mixed population into one powerful state worked equally against the concentration of purpose and continuity of tradition whereby each new generation builds upon the achievements of its predecessors. Mutually hostile cities lacked the shaping, unifying force of a strong central government which might guide collective effort toward great ideal ends. The wealth of the country, deriving from the fertility of its soil and the gains of trade, contributed to the adornment of life sumptuously. But its civilization was materialistic; and its borrowed culture was turned to the service of practical aims.

Utensils of the most elementary form sufficed for the peasantry. Wealth centred in the cities, whose population comprised landowners, warriors, traders, and craftsmen. The Canaanites were skilled in the building of fortress-walls and towers. For the rest, the city was allowed to happen. Within the cramped area enclosed by the massive wall, dwellings of mud or sun-dried brick were crowded together quite at individual caprice. Whatever ground was not thus taken made the streets. When a house collapsed from age or fire or the destruction of war, another was built upon the wreckage, making a new level, and set perhaps at a different angle. Of architecture in

the great sense there was nothing. The centre of activity, at once market and law-court, was the broad gate of the city wall. The sanctuary was a hillside, the "high place," fitted forth with rough-hewn standing stones and altars of earth or rock under the open sky. Sculpture likewise attained no development. Small images, in immense numbers, of gods and animals, in clay, stone, and bronze, though expressive of their intention, were crude in form and workmanship. The palaces, temples, and public edifices of Babylonia and Egypt, with their prodigious sculptures and magnificent decorations, were beyond the power of the Canaanite cities, as they were beyond their needs.

Rather it was in the lesser arts of use and embellishment that Canaan excelled. In this country crossed by the caravans of the nations, abounded articles of foreign handiwork, to which the native craftsman looked for his models. Imported wares the Canaanite potters imitated with success. Gold, silver, ivory and precious stones furnished the jeweller with material for cunningly wrought things of adornment. Tools and weapons were fashioned of flint and bronze; the use of iron entered the country with the coming of the Philistines. What the Canaanites were able to achieve in weaving and the working of metals and wood has endured in representations on Egyptian monuments and descriptions contained in Egyptian records. These memorials attest that in the great period of civilization in Canaan, during its relations with the Eighteenth Dynasty, the productions of its native workers, though derived from foreign examples, were not inferior to those of contemporary Egypt in richness and skill.

Writing was extensively practised in Canaan as early as the fifteenth century. The Amarna correspondence, supplemented by similar tablets unearthed in old Canaanite cities, indicates the ease

and frequency with which letters were exchanged. Though the art was doubtless the secret of professional scribes, chiefly in the service of kings and officials, yet by recourse to the scribe the use of writing was available to all the people. One city, known still to the Israelites by its ancient name of "City of Books" or "of the Scribe," may have been thus designated as a depository of archives. The script of the Amarna period was the Babylonian cuneiform. Originating in the Euphrates valley, it was adapted to the material its inventors had at hand, soft clay moulded into tablets which received the impress of the wedge-shaped writing instrument and were then hardened in the sun or in fire. The introduction of papyrus from Egypt into Phœnicia in the twelfth century made possible the employment of a cursive script, in which individual letters replaced the syllabic units of the earlier cuneiform. This alphabetic script — whether it was invented by the Phœnicians and was carried in their trading ships across the Mediterranean, or whether on the contrary they derived it from the western islands or from Egypt — became the medium of writing of the Canaanite language, the speech which the Israelites adopted when they settled in the country. But though the art of writing was early at their disposal and in widespread use, the peoples of Canaan, always dependent on greater, more favored nations, developed no native literature. This achievement was reserved for later possessors of the land.

The level of culture attained by a people is defined ultimately by its religion. Babylonia and Egypt, in the service of their great national religions, produced an amazingly copious and contemplative literature. But no similar texts exist to illustrate the beliefs and usages of Canaan. Except for fragmentary references in the Amarna letters and in Egyptian records, its gods survive only in the little images recovered from the soil, and in Canaanite proper names com-

pounded with the names of deities. The manner of their worship must be inferred from the remains of cultus objects and from allusions to it contained in the Hebrew scriptures. No legends embodying their myths, no hymns to the gods, no codes of ritual laws illumine the profounder realities of life as the Canaanites conceived or felt them.

Of an impressionable, imaginative race, the Canaanites became deeply rooted in the soil. And their religion, like their civilization, was materialistic and practical. Its chief gods were the deities representing the productive forces of nature. Every community or locality had its *Baal*, the "owner" of the land, the bestower of bounty, each baal distinguished from all others by the sphere of his individual proprietorship. Companion to him was the *Baalath*, goddess of generation. Worship was rendered to the baal in a spirit of grateful abandon. At the high place was offered sacrifice of animals and the produce of the fields with orgiastic rites. Deities distinguished by proper names were the sun, Shamash — whence sun-myths known to Israel, like the story of Samson — the moon, Sin, and the god of storms, Ramman-Adad; and foreign gods besides. No formal religious system was accepted by the country as a whole: the several deities were not elevated to rank in an organized pantheon; and there was no single "Lord of the gods." On its own plane of nature-worship, with a very large admixture of credulity, of fear of demons and belief in the magical efficacy of charms, the religion of the Canaanites, essentially a religion of the people, was of such vitality that it worked powerfully upon Israel. But it never purified itself of the grosser elements. Influenced by the lore of Babylonia and Egypt, yet it was in no sense comparable to their deeply reasoned, idealizing religions. It reached no conception of moral values; and it wholly failed of spirituality.

THE PROMISED LAND

Israel fell upon Canaan from the desert, advancing in the name of Yahweh, its one and militant God. Wrought to single sharpness of edge by the hard discipline of solitude in the wastes, the Hebrews in the simple strength of youth were launched upon a crowded mature luxurious world. In culture and the practical arts they had everything to learn. Inevitably they submitted to the softening influences of the new way of life. Their range of interests widened by the contact, the content of their experience was largened and enriched. In the process of fusion the Hebrew temper gained flexibility. But it kept its primal intensity of mettle; and with time the Hebrews made the Canaanite civilization their own, stamping it with their distinctive character. The change was gradual, the issue long uncertain. Finally, diversified but indefeasible, the genius of Israel triumphed.

VI

DAYBREAK

Wanderers by primal habitude, the Hebrew tribes encamped at Kadesh were again in movement. In the wilderness south of Canaan, where they had sojourned after their escape from bondage in Egypt, great things had happened. By the mediation of their leader Moses, they received a revelation of Yahweh, whom they accepted as their sole God. United in a common worship, they won also a closer tribal organization, which strengthened them for war. Confident of their God and a new power in themselves, they felt once more the ancestral urge; and their children now grown to manhood, increase of numbers crowded them from their oasis. In the name of Yahweh, they set forth.

The wealth and fertility of Canaan beckoned. Before the tribes essayed to penetrate the alluring but formidable region to the north, Moses, so the narrative runs, sent forward scouts to spy out the country and bring back report of it, whether the land is fat or lean, whether the people there are few or many, strong or weak, and whether they dwell in camps or in strong holds. The spies returned with news of diverse import. It is a land flowing with milk and honey. As a token of its fertility, they fetch with them a branch with one cluster of grapes so huge that it is borne on a staff between two men; grapes therefore grow in abundance, and likewise pomegranates and figs. But the cities are fortified and very large. Moreover, the sons of giants dwell in the land, so that the spies were as grasshoppers by comparison. At this report the tribes lost heart, and proposed that they return to Egypt. Then Caleb stilled the people before Moses,

and persuaded them against their will to attack. In the battle that followed, the Israelites were defeated. But the clan of Caleb succeeded ultimately in conquering territory for itself about Hebron.

These picturesque details render vividly the impression that the ancient strong cities and rich fields of Canaan made upon nomads breaking in rudely armed from the meagreness of waste spaces. Historically, the episode of the spies' mission was but a single instance of an extended process; for probably the invaders were able to effect a permanent settlement only after divers tentatives. Underlying the tradition here is the fact that the several tribes which afterwards constituted the nation entered the land by different courses. Caleb, of the tribe of the Kenizzites, was originally at home in the desert region of Edom; later in Canaan, the clan fused with Judah, which also came up from the south. The tribes that had gathered at Kadesh were merely the nucleus of the subsequent people of Israel. This partial group, fashioned anew by its acceptance of the God of Sinai, was the bearer of the vital principle which ultimately drew together kindred tribes, yet of differing experiences, into the nation. But the time was long and the ways various that brought them all into the gradual, hard-contested mastery of Canaan.

The approach directly northward was blocked by fortress cities and the superior equipment of the Canaanites, trained to fighting through centuries of feuds and foreign war, and ever alert against marauding nomads. The tribes moving from Kadesh, therefore, turned eastward to press into the green tablelands east of the Jordan. But the region was already occupied. For the same great drift from the Arabian desert which had brought the first bands of Hebrews into Canaan, had left here groups of tribes who won territory for themselves and attained nationality. These were *Edom*, south of the Dead Sea toward the east, *Moab* northward to the river Arnon

and beyond, and *Ammon* from the borders of Moab northward to the Jabbok. Hebrew tradition recognized Israel's kinship with them: for Esau-Edom was the elder twin-brother of Jacob; and Moab and Ammon were sons of Abraham's nephew Lot.

Community of racial stock, however, did not spell accord. Edom, hostilely inclined, barred the road to the newcomers' eastward march. What the younger brother could not gain by force he attempted to secure through negotiation. The account of Israel's parley with the king of Edom sketches the nomad manner of life and the punctilious formalities of intertribal exchange.

Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border: let us pass, I pray thee, through thy land: we will not pass through field or through vineyard, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go along the king's highway, we will not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy border. . . . If we drink of thy water, I and my cattle, then will I give the price thereof: let me only, without doing anything else, pass through on my feet. And he said, Thou shalt not pass through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Wherefore Israel turned away from him.

Willingness to observe the rules did not avail the weak against the strong. The wanderers, who had left Kadesh in quest of pasturage, were compelled to march around the borders of their elder kinsmen established on the soil. Pressing into Moab from the east, after their wide circuit of Edom, they met with better success. For Moab had already yielded to the domination of a foreign aggressor. The Amorites, whose rebellion against the suzerainty of Egypt in Syria is recounted in the Amarna letters, had swept southward and possessed themselves of the cities of the eastern tablelands. Their king, Sihon, had set his capital in Heshbon. It was with the Amorites, therefore,

lords of a conquered people, that Israel had to contend for entrance into the land. As in the case of Edom, the Israelites opened negotiations with Sihon by a request for friendly passage across his territory. Refusal was followed by armed attack; Israel defeated the Amorites, and finally, according to the narrative, occupied their cities. Whether the Moabites themselves shared in the campaign, on the one side or the other, yet as they had before submitted to the Amorites, so now in time they became subject to the victorious invaders from the desert.

Whatever the success of the Israelites in the region east of the Jordan, it is probable that they rested long here before attempting to cross into Canaan. The land, renowned for its fertility, was amply suited to the grazing of their flocks. Here Gad and Reuben remained in permanent possession. Possibly Gad was not among the tribes that came up out of Egypt. As the son of Jacob's concubine, he had only a remote relationship with Israel; and later he was merged with the Moabites, among whom he dwelt. Reuben, though accounted the firstborn, was early detached from his brothers, and he played little, if any, part in the conquest of Canaan. Both Reuben and Gad were reproached by Deborah that they came not to the help of their brethren in the war against Sisera. Their history, obscurely interwoven with the fortunes of Israel, is typical of the accidental, unstable ties which linked the tribes in a common enterprise or again loosed them along divergent ways.

While the Hebrews lingered east of the Jordan, they may have experienced the beginnings of that change in material condition which was wrought out finally in Canaan. The Moabites, coming originally from the desert, were already a farmer people like the Canaanites, and like them, they had many cities. Established on the soil, tribes had become a nation, ruled by kings. Their god Chemosh was

a god of the whole people. An inscription of their king Mesha, dating from the ninth century B.C., gives evidence of a long practice in the art of writing. Settlement on the land, therefore, had made possible a development of civilization far in advance of the old tribal manner of life. So the example of the Moabites, as the Hebrews sojourned among them, doubtless worked upon the newcomers. Memories of these influences survived in Israelite tradition. "The people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab: for they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto the Baal of Peor." The late Priestly note of the intercourse of Israelites with "Midianite" women, occurring in this context, may represent the same early experience of the tribes in the midst of an alien people. As happened afterwards in Canaan, so now the invaders intermarried with the resident population. In consequence of this partial fusion of the two groups, the sons of Jacob, forgetting their new allegiance to Yahweh, were seduced to the worship of other gods. The punishment which Yahweh visited upon his unfaithful people may symbolize the fact that some of the Hebrews, detached thus from their group, were permanently lost to their brethren. When the bond of common devotion to the one God of Sinai was relaxed, the disloyal clans might not be accounted to Israel.

In Moab, tradition tells, Moses died. And the leadership passed to a chief of the tribe of Ephraim, to Joshua, who was the first of the heroes of Israel who bore in his own name the name of Yahweh.

But the conquering Hebrew tribes at ease in the fertile tablelands east of the Jordan had not yet reached the term of their adventures. From the heights they looked out over Canaan, which invited their increasing numbers to further conquest. When at length the fields of

Moab no more sufficed, the militant shepherds, struggling down by rocky paths to the Jordan, forded the swift current and threw themselves against the strong city of Jericho.

Secure within massive walls of stone and brick, dominated by the citadel, Jericho was not to be stormed by nomad bands lacking engines of assault. As in the days of Abraham and Jacob, what Israel could not win by force it accomplished by guile and stratagem. Two spies sent forward by Joshua toward nightfall penetrated the city gate, and came to a harlot's house upon the great wall. Here their presence might be least remarked; and here too they might find some loose fellows whom they could persuade to treachery. Even so, news of the strangers had already reached the king. But the harlot Rahab hid the men upon the roof among stalks of flax which she had laid out to dry; and the king's officers despatched to apprehend the spies were deluded with evasive words. "Yea, the men came unto me, but I wist not whence they were: and it came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them." And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they that pursued were gone out, the gate was closed. Then Rahab let the men down by a cord upon the wall, and they escaped to the mountains. After three days, while their pursuers sought them vainly, they came again to Joshua.

The tribes moved forward and surrounded the city, so that it was straitly shut within its gates. Thereupon the narrative recounts the fall of Jericho in terms difficult to translate into historic fact. Seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns, the armed men going before them, and the Ark of Yahweh and the multitude of the people following, compassed the city seven days, blowing the trumpets. On the seventh day, they marched round seven times. At the seventh

time, the seven priests blew a mighty blast upon the horns, the people raised a great shout, and the walls of Jericho fell. The victors, saving alive only Rahab and her family, burned the city and all that was in it with fire; and they set a curse upon the ruins. In this procedure with its repeated insistence upon the mystic number seven, it is evident that the spirit of magic pervaded the traditions. The figure of Rahab may represent certain of the people of Jericho, perhaps Hebrews of an earlier day already received into citizenship, who treacherously ranged themselves on the side of the assailants, in whom they recognized the kinship of a common origin. A fortified city of the strength of Jericho could be taken only by treachery from within or by the surprise of stratagem. That the city should be burned by the victors was a matter of course. The invaders, so far as lay in their power, put the inhabitants to the sword, and in the name of their god wrought utter destruction of material. The episode of the spies and Rahab reflects an image of life in an ancient Canaanite city; and the conquest of Jericho was typical of the difficulties which lay before the oncoming tribes and of the fierce ardor which made possible their first successes.

From Jericho the Hebrews pressed westward against Ai, set among the hills. Their spies had reported that the people of Ai were but few; and in order that all Israel might not needlessly toil up thither, Joshua sent forward a small detachment. But the men of Ai beat them off with loss. Then Joshua placed troops in ambush west of the city, while the main body from the east moved as if to attack. The townsmen rushed out to meet these assailants, leaving the city unguarded; and the Israelites seemed to flee. Thereupon the troops in ambush seized the city and set it on fire. The Canaanites, caught thus between two forces, front and rear, were defeated and put to the sword. The king of Ai, however, the victors took alive: they

hanged him upon a tree until the evening; then cutting down the body, they cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised thereon a great pile of stones. The cattle and the spoils this time they saved for themselves. But they burned the city, and made it a heap of ruins and a desolation.

Yet stratagem was not exclusively on the side of Israel. About a day's journey west of the Hebrews' camp, the city of Gibeon lay exposed to a further march of the invaders. "When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they also did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-skins, old and rent and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and was become mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We are come from a far country: now therefore make ye a covenant with us." The Hebrews, neglecting to consult the sacred lot, were deceived; and they made a treaty with the Gibeonites. When they learned the truth, they still remained faithful to their oath, to let the people live; but in time and by superior numbers, they constrained the Gibeonites to serve them, — to be gatherers of wood and drawers of water for the sanctuary of Yahweh. Partly by success in battle, partly by treaty with the inhabitants, Israel was advancing into the gradual occupation of Canaan.

The forward sweep into Canaan of militant tribes from beyond the Jordan, with the fall of Jericho and Ai in their victorious course and the capitulation of Gibeon, disquieted cities to the westward, which perceived the menace of their advance. The king of Jerusalem, summoning four other kings to alliance with him, proposed an attack on the Gibeonites, who had weakly made terms with the

aggressive Hebrews. Gibeon, which had no king but yet was "as one of the royal cities" in importance, may have belonged to the territory subject to Jerusalem, whose ruler therefore sought to hold the daughter city to its allegiance. When the five kings with all their hosts went up and encamped against Gibeon, its people called to the conquering tribes to help. Joshua and all the troops and all the hero captains, by a forced night march, took their enemies by surprise and routed them with great slaughter. The five kings in wild flight hid themselves in a cave. The Israelites rolled huge stones to the mouth of it and set men to keep it, while they continued the pursuit of the broken foe, until the remnant found refuge in their fenced cities. Balked by these fortresses, they returned to the cave and brought forth the five kings to Joshua, who commanded his captains to put their feet on the necks of the kings, to symbolize their present triumph — and also to work magically for the future. And afterward Joshua smote them, and put them to death, and hanged them on five trees until the evening. At sunset they took them down from the trees, and cast them into the cave, and laid great stones at the mouth of it.

Conditions in Canaan as shadowed forth in the narrative here have not changed through the two centuries and more since the Amarna letters pictured the turmoil of the land. Abd-khiba, king of Jerusalem, had much to report to his Egyptian overlord in bitter complaint of the ravages of the Khabiru; and the later king found himself in similar plight. Now, as then, some cities made common cause with the marauders to throw off their allegiance to their ruler in the mother city; with the result that the newcomers established themselves in permanent occupation. Or certain of the petty kings combined in alliance to resist the onslaught of tribes from the desert borders, not always with success. Whatever their numbers and the

limited scope of their first conquests, the fierce tribes of Israel lacked nothing of the terror which the ancestral Khabiru inspired in Canaan.

Northward, as they pressed into the land, the Israelites encountered another coalition of kings; and here they had to meet a new method of warfare. Their earlier victories were won among the hills; now they entered the plains, where their adversaries had drawn up a great force equipped with horses and chariots. Howbeit, by a sudden attack, wherein perhaps surprise and cunning mingled with their valor, the Israelites defeated their assembled enemies; and they houghed the horses, and burned the chariots with fire.

Somewhat in these terms the Ephraimite historian of Israel, writing three or four centuries afterwards, conceived the conquest of the promised land; and so, later generations viewed it. Whatever may be the historic facts underlying the narratives, yet the instances cited are in part representative of the long course of the Israelites' occupation of Canaan. The settlement of the tribes was a process of gradual penetration, by force of numbers, by victory in armed conflict, by treaty, or by sufferance of the local native population. The Hebrews entered Canaan not as a definitely compact body under a single common leadership, but in groups and independently, each for itself, as circumstances determined. Some tribes, like Judah with its affiliated clans, doubtless pressed in from the south, and established themselves in the region about Hebron, later the capital of King David, before he took Jerusalem. Others, chief among them the Joseph tribes, crossing the Jordan from the east, won for themselves at first the barren and less densely peopled reaches of the highlands. Still other tribes, reckoned to the children of Israel, like Asher, mentioned as a Canaanite group in an inscription of Ramses II, a century before the Israelite conquest, probably therefore were

settled already in the land when their kinsmen set out from Kadesh to fight and triumph in the name of Yahweh. Asher and similar outlying tribes were accounted to Yahweh's people in the very early Song of Deborah, which was virtually contemporaneous with the events it recites. But on the other hand, the genuinely old traditions recognize that as the sons of concubines their relationship in Jacob's family was more remote than that of their brethren of legitimate strain; yet the narratives do not reveal at what moment or by what occasions these tribes were united with Israel.

The actual conquest of Canaan, therefore, was as fragmentary as it was gradual. The Israelites of the north and of the south were divided by a line of strong cities from Jerusalem in the east to Gezer in the west, which remained Canaanite until after the establishment of the kingdom. In the lowlands and the maritime plain, the tribes made way only with the slow lapse of time: for here the walled cities and the "cities set on their mounds" successfully repelled the attack of undisciplined tribes; and the terrain gave scope to deploy the cavalry and iron chariots with which the Canaanites were furnished abundantly. Against such forces the rude bands trained only in the desert could not advance in the first shock of numbers; their opportunity lay rather in hill fighting, with its chances of ambush and sudden raid. The tribes reached the end of their wanderings by diverse ways; and equally varied were the conditions of their settlement. It was not until their political unification under the monarchy that they began to have a common history. But they were one in racial origin, and of similar earliest experience; and all shared, though in different measure, in the moulding of their common genius.

When the Hebrews swept in upon Canaan, they were still impelled by a fierce vehemence, born of the desert. As they threw

themselves, ill-equipped but shouting their wild battle-cries, against the strong cities, the terror they spread abroad counted to them for strength. Victorious, they were fanatic and pitiless. The cruelty of their passionate race was intensified by divine sanction, for Israel's battles were the battles of Yahweh, God of hosts. So they "devoted" to Yahweh the defeated enemy. The ban implied utter extermination: to the conquered, death by the sword, by burning, hanging, stoning; and complete destruction of material. Israel had yet to affirm its difference from other peoples. The tribes who penetrated Canaan were hardly to be distinguished from their kindred of the desert, except for their newly won knowledge of Yahweh, a knowledge fraught with immense potencies. The acceptance of Yahweh as Israel's sole God, though decisive, wrought no sudden metamorphosis. To transfigure the tribal god of a few nomad clans into the creator and supreme spiritual ruler of the world was the achievement of a peculiarly gifted people across centuries of extreme vicissitudes.

VII

THERE WAS NO KING IN ISRAEL

By separate ways and at different moments, certain Hebrew tribes, wanderers of old time from out of the desert, winning a seat in the bounteous land of Canaan, there struck root in the soil. It was yet a century before the several tribes, traditionally twelve in number, were united as a single people under a king. From the beginning each tribe had its individual fortunes; and therein it had moulded a characteristic personality. The edge of tribal consciousness was never blunted. In after ages Israel delighted to commemorate the ancestral fibre and deeds of prowess that made the nation. During the reign of splendid Solomon, ancient songs of the tribes were gathered into a poem ascribed dramatically to the paternal pride of Jacob; and some generations later, similar songs were attributed to the prophetic inspiration of Moses. The Blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49) and the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33) were framed collectively to signalize the distinction of the various tribes as it was expressed in their special temper and adventures.

Reuben, first born of Israel, yet failed of leadership because of his inconstancy; unfaithful to his trust, he dishonored his father's name. So Deborah too reproached him that he came not to aid his brethren against the common enemy. But though his men are now few, his kinship with the parent stock is still remembered, for Moses' song utters the hope that he may live and not die. Perhaps Reuben early allied himself with a native group east of the Jordan, and surrendering thus his identity as a Hebrew tribe, was in time lost to Israel.

Simeon and Levi, as likewise elder sons of Jacob, may have entered

Canaan in the van of the Israelite invasion. It suited their character to lead the way, for they were true children of the desert, turbulent and breathing fury. Weapons of violence were their swords; fierce was their anger and their wrath was cruel. Treacherously violating their compacts, they were ruthless in slaying; and they devastated wantonly: — an echo of their infamous deed in Shechem. But their ferocity availed not to get them a footing in the land; for the real conquest of Canaan fell to their more pliant brothers who followed them. Simeon, in the far south, became few and was absorbed in the expanding tribe of Judah. Levi as a tribe disappeared completely.[1] Thus were the atrocious ones divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel.

The fortunes of Judah unfold successively. At first fighting alone, "with his hands he contended for himself," he remained separated from his brethren by a line of strong cities which resisted the invaders until the time of David. May Yahweh hear his voice and bring him in unto his people! Then the Judahite poet's song, on the lips of Jacob, celebrates the glories of the youngest of Leah's sons. As the lion is lord of the jungle, so Judah is king among men; and like the lion, he lives by his strength. The choicest domain of Canaan is his portion. Mounted regally upon an ass's colt he may, when he will, bind his beast to the vine, so abundantly sturdy are its stalks. Plenteously may he wash his vesture in the blood of the grape. His eyes gleam with the exaltation of the cup, and his teeth are white with milk. The poet's ecstasy does not overpass the truth; for the shepherd Judah, advancing from the wilderness of the south into the grazing lands and vine-clad hills with ever growing power, gave Israel its greatest king.

Zebulon in the north set his borders by the sea, neighbor to the

[1] For some reason not now understood, the name Levite was used to designate a certain class of priests.

Phœnicians, established anciently and famous for their trading ships. Close by Zebulon dwelt his full brother Issachar. The newcomers learned to traffic in the products of ocean and shore, sucking the abundance of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand. To gain a place for himself Issachar, because the land was pleasant, forswore his strength; bowing his shoulder to bear, he became a servant under task work, — as many other clans must have done as they merged with the native Canaanites. But something of the ancestral warlike spirit survived, for the chieftains of Issachar went out with their brother tribes to fight against Sisera.

The little tribe of Dan, not of legitimate strain, maintained itself through many changes of estate. An antique story relates the migration of the Danites: how under increasing pressure of their hostile neighbors in the region west of Jerusalem, they sent forth scouts to spy out the land northward and search it; how they set forward thither, six hundred armed men with their families and cattle and goods moving before them; how on the way, in the hill country of Ephraim, they despoiled a man of his shrine and its images, and bore it off with them; how they came to Laish in the distant north, belonging to a people which dwelt apart in quiet and security, but because there was none to save them, the militant tribe put the inhabitants to the sword and burned the city. On the site of the old, they built for themselves a new city, which they called Dan after the name of their father. With accordant metaphor the poems figure Dan as once a lion's whelp leaping forth from Bashan, but now become a serpent in the path, striking from behind; he bites the horse's heels so that the rider falls backward. The tribe's waning strength turned to cunning, which barely served against all the foes who threatened to overwhelm it; for the hope is expressed that Dan may still *judge* his people "as one of the tribes of Israel," received into full brotherhood.

Gad, born of Jacob and a concubine, was akin to the Israelite tribes, but he was not among those that entered Canaan. Settled east of the Jordan, he was exposed to the raids of nomad bands; but like a lioness of the desert, he was fierce to rend his prey. Later he was merged with the Moabites.

Gad's blood-brother Asher, whose borders marched with the Sidonians in the garden lands north of Carmel, reaped opulence, dainties for the table of a king; his bread was fatness and he dipped his feet in oil. With bars of iron and brass strong were his cities. Thence eastward, equally fortunate was Naphtali, full with the blessing of Yahweh.

Befitting his station, Joseph, elder born of the favorite wife Rachel, is acclaimed a prince among his brethren. His mettle proved over harrying bowmen of the desert, now with the power of a wild ox shall he push all peoples even to the ends of the earth. Implanted in the most luxuriant reaches of the land, he is a fruitful bough by a fountain. A firstling bullock, majesty is his. In blessing upon him are lavished the utmost treasures of exuberant imagination: — the precious things of heaven, the dew, and the deep that coucheth beneath, the precious things of the fruits of the sun, the precious things of the growth of the moon, the chief things of the ancient mountains, the precious things of the everlasting hills, the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof. It is a vision of Israel in the zenith of its brief worldly glory.

Benjamin, "son of the south," the youngest of all Jacob's children, gave Israel its first king. His lot was less favored than that of his full brother Joseph: for he had to maintain himself by his might in war; his portion in the land touched the strong cities of Jerusalem and Gezer, fortresses still Canaanite, and it neared the borders of the redoubtable Philistines. The old desert spirit was yet quick in

him, and he lived by raiding merchant caravans that filed through his territory. So Benjamin is likened to a ravening wolf that in the morning devours his prey, but at evening divides the spoil.

Imagery suggested by the great facts of their environment leaps to the poets' command. The lion, the wild ox, the wolf, the serpent are instant memories of the desert, from which Israel had come but recently. The strong ass crouching down between the sheepfolds, the ass's colt upon which the nobles of the people were wont to ride, the vine and the fruitful bough, the gains of trafficking and the generous yield of earth's bounty, — these images of life on the soil glow with the first freshness of a new world hardly won. The union of the tribes in a monarchy was the height from which the poets who wrote down these songs of the people looked out over the nation. Even then the tribes were figured as individuals; but still more were they separate and distinct as they fought their way into the land. During the century preceding their union, along their slow, uncertain course to the mastery of Canaan, "there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes."

It was a time of anarchy throughout the country. The weakened grasp of Egypt was now withdrawn entirely; and no other power then was strong enough to assert its aggressive authority in a land that had known so many conquerors. Some of the Canaanite cities, ever at feud with one another, continued to hold sway each over a limited territory, but a general government was wholly lacking. There was little peace and no security. "Caravans ceased; and the travellers walked through by-ways." The invaders, on their part, had not yet established themselves in undisputed possession. Wars were still to be fought with the Canaanites; and as of old, marauders from the desert menaced the produce of labor on the soil. In the regions where

the newcomers had proved stronger than the native peoples, they were beginning to dominate the older population; elsewhere, "they dwelt in the midst of the Canaanites, for they did not drive them out." But the Israelites in their turn were vanquished in another sense. For the radical change of all their immemorial customs threatened the extinction of their fiercely cherished tribal individuality. "The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods." So intermarriage with the farmer folk wore away the barriers of self-conscious tribal exclusiveness; and the accidental links of immediate association and locality were replacing the old ties of kinship. Wandering keepers of sheep became husbandmen attached to the land.

The ancestral turbulence yielded inevitably to the arts of settled life, so that "no shield or spear was seen among the forty thousand in Israel." Now for the good things of earth, denied them before, they were indebted to other gods than their own God of the barren steppes; and the intensive worship of Yahweh, which had drawn them together on the border of Canaan, was diffused into the service of the local baals. "They chose new gods." In the absorption of the newcomers with the native peoples, the ancient tribal organization was breaking up: "the rulers ceased in Israel." The tribes, by nature individualistic and loving freedom, had not yet arrived at the centralized constraint of kingship; for the waning authority of the sheikh was transformed but slowly into the power accruing to the city prince.

Thus two opposed forces were at work to mould the temper of Israel. Tenacity of old forms and customs, which made the fibre of the race, was set against the necessity of change imposed by new condi-

tions. The gradual resolution of the conflict, after several ventures, came with the union of the tribes under a king. But during the first century of their settlement in Canaan, they were assailed by enemies from without and disintegrating influences within. Tribal rivalries were bitter; and only at a moment of extreme crisis which imperilled their common existence were the sons of Jacob able to unite for a common end.

Few memories of these troubled early days lingered on in the kingdom. Traditions of the tribes recalled great deeds of their heroes; but mere fragments of them were all that survived in the written history of the nation. A very ancient poem, rehearsed from age to age in the happy workaday times of peace, "far from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water," celebrated the decisive victory of Israel over its Canaanite enemies. These several strands of story and song, close to the lives of men, were woven by eagerly devout preceptors of later generations into a narrative, the Book of Judges, which should exemplify the mysterious wisdom of Yahweh's dealings with his wayward people. Yet the legends thus preserved still kept their ancient grain; and with the vividness of direct experience they disclose brief glimpses of Israel in the making.

The fierce passions of the old days flared up in the exploit of Ehud the Benjaminite. His tribe, settled west of the Jordan in the region of Jericho, was open to constant attack by the Moabites from across the river. These had so far prevailed that they possessed the Benjaminite City of Palm Trees, and forced the people to pay tribute to Moab. After years of oppression, Ehud rose up to deliver his kinsmen by a bloody and cunning deed. The hero fashioned for himself a two-edged sword, a cubit long; and being a left-handed man, he girded the weapon under his raiment on the right thigh, where it

might escape detection. At the head of the train that bore the tribute, he sought an audience with Eglon, the Moabite king. After the present had been offered and the bearers were dismissed, Ehud, who had departed with them a little way, returned, saying, "I have a secret errand unto thee, O king!" Eglon, seated in royal refreshing in his cool upper chamber, commanded silence, and his attendants withdrew. Face to face with the king alone, — it was the moment the wily Benjaminite had contrived. Then he said, "I have a message from God unto thee." The king, a very fat man, rose heavily to receive the divine communication.

And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: and the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the sword out of his belly; and the dirt came out. Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlor upon him, and locked them. When he was gone out, the king's servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlor were locked, they said, Surely he doeth his easement in his summer chamber. And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlor; therefore they took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.

In the confusion, the assassin made good his flight. Arrived in his homeland, Ehud blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim. His kinsmen, rallying to the summons, followed his lead down from the hills, and smote the Moabites at the fords of the Jordan so that none of them escaped.

The primal relish of violence and cunning savors the grim humor of the story, recited to exulting acclaim around the evening fire. By guile the mere tribesman outwits the mighty king, though at the fatal moment the crafty one does not lack indeed the resolution to

thrust home. The hero knows how even to turn his physical defect to advantage. Deity itself, in this rude age, is not too sacred or remote from men to serve as pretext to the profit of his enterprise. Then with a tremendous power of dramatic contrast, sheer horror breaks in hoarse laughter. Outside the bolted door, the attendants wait upon the necessity of their royal master; within, sprawls the body of the fat king in his blood and filth. Though Israel created no great drama, the elements of it lay close at hand in the vivid figments of popular imagination. The capture of Jericho by the Moabites and their expulsion by the settlers whose territory they had seized, may well have been a fact in the history of early Israel. Whether fact or imagining, the story of Ehud's deed is eternally true to the spirit of the tribes.

Neighbor to Benjamin on the north, the Joseph tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh suffered from continual depredations of the Midianites; for when the Israelites had sown, the children of the East, like locusts for multitude, came up with their tents, their camels and their cattle, and encamped against them. Year after year the raiders destroyed the increase of the earth and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor ass. The people fled their fields, seeking refuge in the dens and caves of the mountains. So meagre was the yield of the harvest for such as remained, that the floor of a winepress sufficed for the threshing. At length it fell to a man of the little clan of Abiezer in Manasseh to rid the land of its enemies. The story has it that Gideon, while beating out wheat in his winepress, received the call of Yahweh to save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; but an altogether human incitement spurred him to action, for the marauders had slain his brothers, and upon him therefore was laid the stern duty of blood revenge. Summoning three hundred of his clansmen, he pursued the Midianites, who had withdrawn across the Jordan after their devastations; by a stratagem recalling the tactics of

Joshua at Jericho, he threw their hosts into a panic, and finally took captive their two kings.

Tradition was busy with the fame of Gideon, also named in one strand Jerubbaal, and legends multiplied of his exploits. Into the narrative of his victory over Midian are plaited two differing accounts, both of which illustrate the manner of the times. In one account Gideon summoned Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon and Naphtali to his aid; only when the marauders were in full flight did he call his brethren of Ephraim. The Ephraimites succeeded in capturing the two Midianite chieftains, Oreb — the Raven, and Zeeb — the Wolf; but they chided Gideon that he had not bidden them at the first. For tribal jealousy was strong. With figurative crafty eloquence Gideon turned aside their wrath with fair words: "What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hand the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you?" Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that. The other account reveals Gideon as a man of action after the antique pattern. In the headlong pursuit of Midian beyond Jordan, Gideon came to Succoth, and there begged refection for his fainting men. But the princes of the city answered him scoffingly. Then said Gideon: "Therefore when Yahweh hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will thresh your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers." And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake likewise; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower." And Gideon proved his word.

The narrative of the victory ends with a scene in old heroic style. The Israelite who left his threshing to lead his clansmen to war, now

confronts his captives menacingly. The Bedawy chieftains, in purple raiment, and adorned with golden earrings and pendants, with gold chains and crescents about their camels' necks, are splendid imposing figures even in their humiliation. To Gideon's challenge, "What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?" the sheikhs undaunted answer haughtily, "As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king!" Then cries Gideon, mollified by the shrewd reply, but remembering his dead, "They were my brethren, the sons of my mother: as Yahweh liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you." But the blood of the murdered demands vengeance. Gideon turns to Jethro, his firstborn, "Up, and slay them!" For the penalty which he himself hesitates to exact devolves next upon his oldest son. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna, proudly awaiting the wild justice they would mete to another in like circumstances, ask only, "Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength." And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the crescents that were on their camels' necks.

Gideon returned to his people in triumph. His tribesmen would make him king over them. He might thus found a royal house, for the dignity was to pass to his son and his son's son. But the hero, according to a later form of the narrative, put aside the proffered honor, for the glory of Yahweh; only God should be king of Israel. Nevertheless, Gideon lived in regal state. He had many wives, and seventy sons, besides a concubine in the city of Shechem, who bore him a son, Abimelech. With the spoils taken from Midian, he established in his residence city of Ophrah a sanctuary like the sanctuary of a king.

The story that follows of Gideon's son Abimelech and his brief kingship illustrates the complex, vaguely defined relations existing between the newly settled Hebrew invaders and the older population,

at the period of transition from the occupation of Canaan by the tribes to the founding of the monarchy in Israel. The narrative is significant also for the instance it affords of local politics and intrigue in these early days.

Gideon, now the chief of his tribe Manasseh, had espoused a Canaanite woman, who as the custom might be, remained with her father's house in her home city. The Israelite leader, though residing at Ophrah, had yet some kind of authority in the neighboring city of Shechem, for its people recognized, after Gideon's death, the pretensions of his seventy sons to rule over them. Their half-brother Abimelech, however, the son of the Shechemite woman, came forward to dispute their right. Returning to his mother's kinsmen in Shechem, he said to all the clan of the house of his mother's father, "Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether it is better for you that all the sons of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) which are three score and ten persons, rule over you, or that one rule over you? Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh." By this appeal to the all-powerful tie of blood, the Shechemites were so won to the adventurer that they financed his cause by funds abstracted from the temple treasury. With the money, Abimelech hired vain and worthless fellows; and at the head of his band of ruffians, he went to his father's house at Ophrah and slew his seventy brothers, except Jotham the youngest, who escaped, for he hid himself. Already accepted by the Canaanites of Shechem, the usurper hoped by this ruthless act to affirm his power also over the Israelite group whose seat was in Ophrah.

With ceremonies at the sacred tree, the men of Shechem made Abimelech king. Then Jotham, learning of what was taking place to his own hurt, appeared before them; the rightful heir, who had barely escaped the violence of the usurper, now dared to challenge

his pretensions. From a commanding position on the mountain which overlooked the city, not without regard to his own personal safety, Jotham harangued the crowd. In the picturesque terms of an ingenious fable, he derided the populace for the unwisdom of their doing, and pronounced a curse upon Shechem and its new king. Not waiting to note the effect of his bold, mocking words, the Israelite princeling fled the city; and he figures no more.

Where Jotham had failed to sow discord between the Shechemites and their king, a stranger-sojourner in the city succeeded. Abimelech had reigned for three years. Residing at some distance from Shechem, he was represented in the city by his officer Zebul. There entered now on the scene one Gaal, who had settled in Shechem with all his family; a man of ready tongue, he had gained the credence of the citizens. On the occasion of a vintage festival, when the people were eating and drinking in the temple precincts, sedition began to stir against Abimelech, the half-Israelite, absentee king. Then Gaal, self-appointed spokesman of the rising agitation, declaimed in braggart words to the fickle crowd, heated with wine, "Who is this Abimelech, son of the Israelite Jerubbaal, that we men of Shechem, of the ancient stock, should serve him? And Zebul, governor of our city, he is only Abimelech's officer! Why should *we* recognize their authority? Would that this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech." Gaal, the stranger resident, was more Shechemite than the Shechemites themselves! Zebul, hearing the seditious outcry and angered by the slur upon his own secondary title, despatched messengers to Abimelech to inform him of the tumult fomented by Gaal. The king appeared before the city with his troops; Gaal, stung to a show of courage by Zebul's taunts, went out to meet him, and was defeated. Zebul, his prerogative vindicated, drove forth Gaal and his kinsmen, that they should not dwell in

Shechem. But apparently the expulsion of the chief disturber did not end the revolt, for again Abimelech attacked Shechem; only by setting fire to the temple stronghold, in which the people had taken refuge, was he able to capture the city. To assure himself against further Canaanite disaffection, he slew the inhabitants and destroyed the city utterly, sowing it with salt in token of its extinction.

Even so, Abimelech's kingship was not secure. Another city, Thebez, presumably like Shechem more Canaanite than Israelite, rebelled. Leading in person the attack upon it, Abimelech met his death. As he drew near the strong tower to set fire to it, a woman cast an upper millstone upon his head and broke his skull. "Then he called hastily unto the young man, his armorbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword and kill me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died." The fate feared by Abimelech fell to Sisera.

The old narrative recounting the fortunes of Abimelech is genuinely historical. The human and dramatic interest of the story with its shrewdly drawn characterization plays against a background of the social conditions of the period. The Israelites were living among the older population in tentative mutual adjustment. The newcomers had not wholly won ascendancy; the Canaanites were ceasing to be actively hostile. The marriage of the chieftain of Manasseh with a woman of Shechem, still predominantly Canaanite, served to link the two groups more closely, and was doubtless typical of relations in the large. That the men of Shechem should elect in favor of Abimelech was natural, for he was of their own stock, and from old time the cities of Canaan were accustomed to kingship; the rule of Gideon's seventy sons, on the contrary, conformed to the Israelite system of leadership exercised by the tribal elders. In numbers and prowess, Israel seems to have been superior; but the Canaanites,

taught by centuries, were more capable in administration and cleverer in political intrigue. Israel had yet to learn the art of government; of which, moreover, it never was supremely master.

Dispersed widely over the land, the Hebrew tribes had each its special difficulties to solve in its own way. That nevertheless they had interests in common was brought home to them by their rally against a league of Canaanite kings. The great battle which followed in the plain of Jezreel seems to have been the last armed conflict between the two peoples, for the victory of the Israelites was complete. The moment is undetermined. Tradition, poetry and legend are concerned but little with chronology. Things happened — once upon a time. The past, for a folk without recorded history, is a vague spacious region of no boundaries. The Song of Deborah, which celebrates immortally the triumph of Israel at the river Kishon, is very old; but it is probable that the battle which gained for the invaders the control of Canaan was fought long after their settlement. Dan had already reached his seat in the north; and his brethren were identified with their respective territories. The tribes were so far conformed to their present condition that the ancient desert temper was profoundly changed. The stern virtues of an elder time yielded to soft luxury. The nobles of the people rode on white asses; and rich carpets were spread for their ease. In a land flowing with milk and honey, a new generation forsook the austere God who had brought their fathers hither; and bending to the comfortable arts of peace, they renounced their primal valor. Then at an instant of crisis, a leader arose to summon them to war, as of old in the name of Yahweh, God of hosts.

The Israelites were overwhelming the native peoples, forcing them to task-work. As in former days, the city-kings of Canaan had been able on occasion to unite for their common advantage, so now the

cities of the plain arrayed their troops, commanded by King Sisera, to resist the alien tribesmen crowding down upon them from the hill country. A prophetess in Israel perceived the menace to Yahweh's people. With frenzied chant, she sounded the call to arms:

> Awake, awake, utter a song!
> Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive!

Perhaps the tribe of Naphtali, whose chieftain Barak was, already had taken the first shock of the Canaanite forces. Now other tribes responded gallantly to Deborah's call. Powerful Ephraim came down, and captains of his brother Machir (Manasseh) with him; martial Benjamin was quick to follow; Zebulon and Issachar left their trafficking to risk their lives side by side with Naphtali on the field of battle. Forever memorable and glorious were they, governors and people. Not so, their brother tribes who failed to heed the summons. Reuben sat craven among his sheepfolds, hearing not the war-trumpet but only the sweet piping for the flocks. Gilead (Gad) too abode in base security beyond Jordan. Dan remained among his ships, and prosperous Asher sat still at the haven of the sea. Judah, Simeon, and Levi are not named in the muster roll. Simeon and Levi were already scattered and lost to Israel; Judah, on his way up from the south, was not yet reckoned among the sons of Jacob.

Then the kings of Canaan came and fought in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo. But they took no spoil of booty in the battle, for the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river Kishon, swollen with the winter rains, entangled the wheels of their chariots and swept away their hosts. Sisera, fleeing from the field on foot, perished ingloriously at the hand of a Bedawy woman, in whose tent he had taken refuge.

With swift contrast the action passes to the residence city of the Canaanite king. The queen-mother in her chamber, attended by the

princesses of the royal harem, awaits the victorious return of Sisera. Impatient, anxious, afraid, for still the king comes not, she peers down through the lattice. "Why is his chariotry so long in coming?" She listens for the clatter of horses, faintly, louder, out of the distance — in vain. "Why tarry the hoof-beats of his chariots?" The keenest of her ladies, to quiet her quick-mounting dread, make answer, and the queen repeats to herself, fain to be persuaded, "Have they not found the spoil and now are dividing it, — a slave girl or two of them for every man, and booty of dyed stuffs for Sisera, a spoil of divers colors of embroidery for the neck of the queen?" And Sisera, the king, far away in the black tent of a nomad, lies bloody and broken at the feet of a woman.

Magical in its power of evocation, the Song of Deborah recreates the age and scene. Across the plains of Canaan ancient cities reared their battlements. Centres of trade and industry, they commanded a luxury rivalling the wealth of Babylonia and Egypt. The flash of vision which reveals the palace interior of Sisera's residence, with the royal ladies awaiting the battle-spoil of dyed stuffs and divers colors of embroidery, illumines the magnificence of the old Canaanite civilization. Then up among the highlands, the invaders who had pressed in from the desert, now had turned from the grazing of flocks to till the soil and tend the olive and the vine; losing their former hardiness, yet they threatened by energy of numbers to overrun the plain. In the north, the tribes whose new territories looked off upon the sea were learning from their elder neighbors the arts of trade. Others, established across the Jordan, seemed to have lapsed from their relationship with the sons of Jacob. And in barren regions of the border were pitched the goatshair tents of wanderers, still strangers in the land.

These few contrasts in high relief emerge from a vast obscurity.

So, too, the great figures of Israel's first century in Canaan are not many. A moment of special danger in the general turmoil of the times called forth a leader to guide or save his clansmen; then the tribe went once more its unrecorded way. In the waning memory of later generations, some of the early heroes were but the echo of a name. There was Shamgar, who smote six hundred of the Philistines with an ox-goad. Jair was a person of so great worldly dignity in his tribe that his thirty sons rode on thirty colts of asses; and likewise Abdon had forty sons and thirty grandsons who attained a similar importance. Hero of a quite different sort was Samson, the power of whose fame drew to itself a wealth of stories mythical and legendary. The imagination of a lusty race close to the earth, sensual and crafty, is here unloosed in wild play. The merry rogue, a figure of superhuman strength and demonic cunning, was beloved of the people for his shrewd recklessness and mad pranks. For in him they saw embodied their own qualities, actual or desired, thrown up to heroic scale.

In Jephthah the Gileadite lives a real character of the period. An example of the strong man whom the time created for its needs, all the incidents of his adventurous career are typical of the rude age in which he moved. Born of a concubine, he was driven out by his brothers that he should not inherit in his father's house. Fleeing northward beyond the border of Gilead, he gathered about him a crew of desperate fellows, himself the chief of the outlaw band. Jephthah was a good fighter. And when his tribe was attacked by desert raiders, the elders in panic were glad enough to turn to the redoubtable freebooter, whom they had cast forth, as now the very man to save them. After some bargaining, they agreed, in reward for his help, to make him commander in war and sheikh of the tribe. His victory over the Ammonites was not the end of his exploits.

When the men of haughty Ephraim, jealous again of the success of a brother tribe, complained that the Gileadites had not summoned them to the war, Jephthah in characteristic high-handed fashion fell upon them and put them to the sword. "And it was so, that when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said, Let me go over, the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth; and he said Sibboleth; for he could not frame to pronounce it right: then they laid hold on him, and slew him at the fords of the Jordan."

The heroes whom the historians in a later time termed Judges rose, as occasion summoned, to leadership of their own individual tribe, or in a larger crisis, to command of a group of tribes, allied for the moment in a common enterprise. After the need was passed, they left, except in the case of Gideon and his son, no natural successor; and they failed to hold the allied groups in a lasting union. There was as yet no king in Israel.

VIII

BUILDING THE NATION

THE descendants of wandering shepherds were now merged with the farmer folk of Canaan. Daily toil on the land, unknown to their fathers, assured them a comfortable stability, which also their fathers had not known — a life less hardy and heroic, more joyously abundant. The returning seasons were celebrated in village festivals, of sacred import but merry in the observance; and the year culminated in a general pilgrimage of families, bringing their bullock and measure of flour and skin of wine, to the central shrine for the worship of their god with sacrifice and feasting. Except when armed foes threatened, the chief figure in the community was the priest, who made known the will of Yahweh; for God, and not a man, was lord of the land and the ruler of life. Of political organization there was only so much as served to order the daily concerns of each little group. Content with the yield of their harvests, the peasant children of an adventurous race desired to be left in peace. A people so constituted held slight promise of worldly glory.

The change of condition which followed the settlement of the Hebrews on the soil involved not only their acceptance of more complex social and ritual practices, but also a different communal organization. Of itself, Israel had not the skill to complete the process, and from within to carry the development to its necessary end. The material was there, but it lacked the inner urge to form itself. The shaping forces came with pressure from without.

The Israelites dwelt among the Canaanites in friendliness; but the several tribes were not yet in secure possession of their territories. In

the regions east of the Jordan, nomads raided and ravaged. The tribes in central Canaan had to contend with a more formidable enemy. About the time that bands of Hebrews, fugitive from Egypt, were moving upon Canaan, a strange people from overseas had powerfully established themselves in the fertile plain southward along the coast. They had come from the island of Crete, scattered by the violent overthrow of an amazing civilization that had reached its height before the ancestors of Israel emerged from the desert. These sea-rovers, though defeated by the might of Egypt under Ramses III (about 1180), found lodgment on the shore of Canaan. Escaped remnant of ruined splendors, they brought to their new home the elaborate forms of their ancient culture. To the last, the Philistines remained an alien people. Their confederated cities, patterned after the states of the old Ægean civilization, presented an impregnable front against all assault; secure within their own borders, they reached out to control the trade routes of Canaan and to extort tribute from weaker peoples. A career of conquest seemed to open before them. Heirs to a long tradition of achievement, they were immeasurably superior to the simple Israelites, not only in political organization but in military competence; their armament of bronze and iron gave them an immense advantage over the peasant tribesmen of the hills. So the power of the Philistines checked the expansion of the Israelites into the plains. More ominous and instant was its forward thrust, which menaced Israel's continued independence.

Early the little tribe of Dan had felt the pressure of its ambitious neighbors and was forced to seek other territory for itself in the distant north. Memories of the strife between the haughty Philistines and the shrewd Israelites were woven into the folk-tales that made sport with the exploits of the Danite hero Samson. Now more serious

than such border skirmishes of yore was the march of Philistine armies northward against the hill country of Ephraim. The tribesmen of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, whose lands were immediately threatened, moved in force to meet the invaders. Battle was joined at Aphek, on the threshold of Benjamin. The Israelites, for no chieftain leader arose as of old to deliver them, were defeated. Had they also, in the easy abundance of Canaan, forgotten Yahweh of Hosts, God of their militant ancestors? Howbeit, in this moment of dismay they bethought themselves of the Ark of Yahweh, which in sterner but not more perilous times had accompanied their fathers to victory. From its resting-place in Shiloh they fetched the sacred chest, which should certify the real presence of God in their midst; and with a shout that resounded in the camp of their enemies, they carried it into battle. But Yahweh withheld his aid. The Israelites were routed utterly. And crowning bitterness, the Ark of God was taken.

The Philistines, following up their triumph, destroyed the ancient sanctuary at Shiloh, and stationed a governor in Gibeah of Benjamin. Three tribes of Israel, uniting the most numerous and the most warlike, were subjected to the yoke of the uncircumcised Philistines. So overwhelming was the power of the conquerors that the Hebrews, either as deserters or as captives, were impressed into the armies of the foe. The import of the disaster all Israel might read. The disciplined aggression of the Philistine was irresistible while the tribes remained divided. As the raids of nomads in former days had brought Gideon to leadership in Manasseh, as once a hostile league of Canaanite princes had inspired Deborah and Barak to rally the tribes to war in Yahweh's name, so now the final compelling necessity of self-defence called forth a king in Israel and created the nation.

Significantly, the man of the hour rose out of Benjamin. Among all the tribes of Israel, from the beginning of their individual history in Canaan, Benjamin was preëminent for his fierce prowess. Youngest of Jacob's sons, he was seated between the tribes of the north and the increasing clans of Judah on the south. His territory, extending from the Jordan to the Philistine border, lay across the highways of Canaan. Its rocky tablelands were suited less to nourish its people on the soil than to produce a hardy strain of highlanders, who lived by the raiding of caravans and the spoils of border war. In the old days of the heroes, it was a Benjaminite, Ehud, who delivered his kinsmen from Moabite oppression by a deed of reckless horror. Times changed. And Benjamin had much to suffer from the Philistines. Though he submitted perforce to the yoke of this alien people of the west, for their armies prevailed against mere bands of undisciplined mountaineers, the primal venturous spirit of the tribe was not wholly broken, but surged again in Saul.

The immediate occasion of Saul's elevation to leadership was by no means singular in the experience of the tribes. The Ammonites, ever hostile to Israel, encamped against the town of Jabesh in Gilead, across the Jordan. The citizens were on the point of surrender; but when they learned the enemy's terms — for he threatened to put out their right eyes and "lay it for a reproach on all Israel," recognizing thus the kinship of the Gileadites with the other tribes — the men of Jabesh asked for seven days' respite that they might summon aid from over Jordan. The enemy granted the request, knowing perhaps the change that the years had worked upon the temper of Israel, weakened further by the Philistine domination. The messengers came to Gibeah of Benjamin. Hearing the dread tidings, the people lifted up their voice and wept. But none bestirred himself to act. It happened then that Saul, the son of a family of wealth, was re-

turning from the day's toil, following his oxen. When he was told the cause of the outcry, with a fury that was characteristic of the man but seemed nothing less than the very spirit of Yahweh rushing mightily upon him, Saul hewed his oxen in pieces, and despatched the bleeding tokens throughout the tribes. On the morrow, so quick was he in action, he smote the Ammonites and scattered them. Before the crisis, though his family were distinguished in Benjamin, Saul was but his father's son, tilling his fields. His rise to instant leadership was abrupt, gained by his impetuous act of sudden resolution. Thereupon his victory in war, according to custom, assured him his new position. But with this difference, which was now not unknown in Israel: on his triumphant return, the people, as the tribesmen of Manasseh had sought to do with Gideon, chose Saul to be their "king."

Saul's later achievements for Benjamin and for all Israel justified the title. The impulsive rally, in which Judah and the Joseph tribes joined with Benjamin, for the relief of distant Jabesh, had roused feeble Israel to vigorous and concerted action. The victory over the Ammonites, though of minor importance in itself, revealed to the tribes their latent powers when united; and it may further have suggested the possibility of an uprising against their Philistine masters with some prospect of success. The first stroke in open revolt was carried through by Saul's son Jonathan; in circumstances not recounted, he slew the Philistine governor resident in Saul's own city of Gibeah. When the Philistine armies, to quell the insurrection, moved against Benjamin, the people were seized with panic, so far forgetting the valor of their fathers, and hid themselves in caves and thickets and even in cisterns; some fled across the Jordan to Gilead. Immediately following his election as king, Saul had recruited a force of three thousand. Now only about six hundred armed men

remained to him. But aided by a bold venture of Jonathan, and an earthquake, Saul struck confusion into the camp of the Philistines. Thereupon the Hebrews serving in the enemy's army came over to Saul; and all the men of Israel who had hid themselves in the hill country returned and joined in the pursuit of the discomfited foe.

Notwithstanding this initial success, "there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul." Furthermore, when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, Israel's hereditary foes, against Moab, Ammon, Edom, and the Amalekites, and put them to the worse, delivering Israel out of the hands of them that despoiled them.

Saul's service to Israel, however, was not limited to his exploits in war. Out of the momentary coalition of certain tribes for an attack upon the Ammonites, he was able, under his single rule as king, to shape a more lasting union, which in turn made possible the effective true monarchy of David. In this sense, Saul was the founder of the nation. The extent to which he consolidated the tribes under his acknowledged leadership can only be inferred; for with the entrance of David upon the scene, the interest of the narrative shifts at once to the fortunes of the younger hero and more glorious king; the fate of Saul is but the dark background for the crescent figure of David. Saul's kingdom, based in Benjamin, included the neighboring Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, and extended across the Jordan to Gilead. He brought Judah also within his rule. At the time of David's flight from Saul's jealousy, the men of Keilah, in the centre of Judah, proved themselves, as between the popular hero of their own tribe and the king, more loyal to Saul. And his authority in Caleb, far to the south, was sufficient to make the region unsafe for the fugitive David. Apparently he was able also to bestow by royal grant fields and vineyards upon his followers in Benjamin. Saul

reigned as king, therefore, with a power and influence that no other leader had yet exercised in Israel. The authority which events placed within his grasp bore no relation to the shortlived "kingship" of Gideon and Abimelech in Manasseh. It was a new thing among the tribes, made possible by the greater exigencies of the later time and by the changing conditions which attended the development of Israel as a people settled upon the land.

The king gathered about him a group of able men. His son Jonathan, of knightly soul, wrought valiantly for Israel, although his friendship with David, in generous disregard of his own succession to the throne, seemed to impair his loyalty as son and subject. Saul's cousin Abner, a sturdy fighter, was captain of his host. Greatest of all, as it proved, was a handsome youth of Beth-lehem in Judah, renowned for his skill with the harp, but soon to evince far weightier talents. The court of Saul, however, though sustained by a considerable personal retinue and a standing army, was of a simplicity befitting a tribal chieftain rather than a king, — in extreme contrast to the secular pomp of the city-princes of Canaan. His sceptre was his spear. And he gave audience sitting under a tamarisk tree upon the high place of Gibeah, outside the town. Concerning Saul's organization of his kingdom as distinct from the old tribal forms, all the narratives are silent.

The kingdom of Israel was rudely shaped under pressure from without as a necessity of defence in war. But other forces were at work to contribute to the result. Despite Israel's defection to alien gods, the cause of Yahweh was still potent to quicken the ancient tribal spirit. It was in the name of Yahweh that the prophetess Deborah had summoned the tribes to war against the league of Canaanite princes; and the great victory at the torrent Kishon was due, as it seemed, to his intervention. If afterwards Yahweh was

forgotten in the seductive cult of the baals, the crushing defeat at Aphek, perhaps half a century later, and the loss of the Ark to the uncircumcised Philistines, issued in a new awakening. Bands of enthusiasts, with wild music and frenzied dances, trooped through the countryside, calling the people back to the single ardent worship of Yahweh. These prophets were fired with zeal for the ancestral God of battles, and they kindled the people with a fervor of warlike emprise. Religion and tribal welfare were one, such welfare as only victory in war could assure. Saul himself succumbed to the contagion of their incitements, so that the saying was current in Israel, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" The ecstatics were distinctly of the people and close to them. Because of their popular influence, they rendered a real service in bringing the tribes back to their old militant faith in the God of hosts, and rousing them to fight for their independence as a nation.

The choosing of Saul to be king in Israel was not the act of a few, high placed in authority; rather, he was lifted on the crest of a popular movement. A leader rising to the crisis of a moment was continued in his leadership under a new title conferred by the general voice, responding to the increasing needs of the time. When the victorious warrior was consecrated as king, it was amid the rejoicing of all the people. In the making of Israel there were, as always in history, outstanding figures to guide events toward definitely practical conclusions. But the people themselves shared in the movements which were moulding their future. When Saul placed David in command of his army, the narrative records that it was good in the sight of the people and in the sight of Saul's servants. The king was not an autocrat, but with due reference to public opinion, he had to reckon with the popular will. Unlike the city-states of Canaan, unlike the empires of Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria, the little Israelite nation

was essentially democratic. It suited the spirit of tribal organization to allow all the heads of families a voice in the councils of the clan; and for the most part throughout the history of the kingdom, the leaders of the nation measured their influence, not by the degree of arbitrary power they exercised, but by the accord they were able to persuade from the whole people.

In response to impulse, as it seemed, Saul performed the sudden act whose consequences raised him to the kingship. But the oldest strand of narrative recounts that he had already been forewarned of the high destiny awaiting him. At Ramah, among the hills westward of Gibeah, dwelt Samuel, of some repute in the country round about as a seer and "man of God." What actual part Samuel had in shaping the events of this critical period is obscure, but doubtless it was considerable. Later historians in retrospect, bestowing upon him the dignity of a judge in Israel and the vocation of a prophet, added enormously to the sum of his achievements for the nation. The oldest narrative recites quite simply that Samuel by virtue of his powers as a seer foretold to Saul his elevation, and he anointed him to be king. Charmingly in the manner of the popular tale, it is related how Saul went out to seek his father's asses and found a royal crown. The spirit of romance, creative and ever-young, contrived the story, but in its color and figured detail is mirrored the life of Israel as it was in the ancient days.

Kish was a prosperous husbandman of Benjamin. Upon a time it fell out that his asses went astray; wherefore he sent forth his son Saul, attended by a servant, to seek them. Passing through all the countryside, yet in three days they found them not.

When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us. And he said unto him, Be-

hold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man that is held in honor; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go. Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way. Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

As they went up the ascent to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before thee: make haste now, for he is come to-day into the city; for the people have a sacrifice to-day in the high place: as soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for at this time ye shall find him. And they went up to the city; and as they came within the city, behold, Samuel came out toward them, for to go up to the high place.

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is within thine heart.

Thereupon Samuel bids Saul to the feast of the sacrifice and bestows on him the chief portion. Returning from the high place, they lodge together that night upon the housetop. Early the morrow morn, Samuel sets his guest upon his way, having told him that the asses were found and that great things should befall him. Before they part, the seer anoints Saul in token of his consecration as king.

The familiar and the marvellous blend into a single texture. Woven

of the stuff of imagination and of everyday life, the narrative tells in its homely way how Saul through the prescience of the seer was indicated as the chosen of Yahweh, and received at his hand the sign of divine appointment. No doubt Samuel, devoted servant of Yahweh, was keenly alive to the needs of Israel, and with his gift of insight was quick to recognize in the stalwart impetuous Saul the man notably qualified to unite the tribes for self-defence. So, preëminent in his community as a man of God, Samuel lent his personal support and prestige to the popular movement that gave Israel a king.

As the years brought new problems and complexities to the king, who must shape his course without the guidance of precedent, Saul came into serious conflict with the priestly authority, dominant before ever there was a king in Israel. Therewith his influence, already shaken by the growing popularity of David, began to wane. Writers in a much later age, whose purpose was to magnify the importance of the official representatives of Yahweh, attributed to Samuel alone the preponderant part in the choice and consecration of Saul; and they proceed to recount the king's quarrels with Samuel, whom they figure as supreme, the consequent rejection of Saul by Yahweh, and his ultimate ruin. These instances may typify conditions afterwards between Israel's kings and the ministers of Yahweh; for as the kingship broadened its functions, it tended to encroach upon the authority of the priesthood.

More trustworthy is the old account of Saul's vengeance on the priests of Nob, the central sanctuary of the little kingdom, not far from Saul's residence town of Gibeah. David, fleeing from the king, had come to Nob, and there he was succored by the chief priest, who supplied him with bread from off the altar, and a sword. When Saul learned of the act, which he chose to regard as treason, he called the

entire company of priests before him, as he held court at the high place of Gibeah. On the charge that they had given aid and comfort to his enemy, Saul ordered his body-guard to slay the priests. "But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of Yahweh." The awe that Yahweh's holy ones inspired was more potent than the king's command. It was an Edomite, Doeg by name, the chief of Saul's herdsmen, who executed the dire behest. The villain had seen David at the sanctuary of Nob, and had betrayed him to his master. At a word from the king, Doeg turned and fell upon the priests, and slew that day forescore and five. And Nob and every living thing therein he smote with the edge of the sword. From the stories that gathered about Saul's conflict with the priests, it may be inferred that during his reign, authority was divided between the old priesthood and the new king. The balance inclined toward the king to the extent that force was on his side.

The tentative, loose union of certain of the tribes under the first "king of Israel" was based in the person of Saul as their leader in war. Apart from the bond of kinship and their common worship of Yahweh, all the conditions of life in Canaan, the dispersion of the tribes over the land, their distinctive local interests, their fusion with diverse groups of Canaanites, made for separateness. The sense of intertribal community was less strong than individual tribal jealousy. So deep-rooted were the tendencies to division that on the death of Solomon, less than a century after Saul, the nation that David had raised to greatness broke again in twain, disparting into the rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Since each tribe, from the beginning, had its "elders of the people," able to decree justice but without power to enforce it, so a centralized general government over a larger unit could hardly evolve of itself from the traditional forms of tribal organization. As to the practical advantages of kingship for strength

in war and the development of material prosperity, the Israelites had before them the example of all other nations. But the constraint of an inclusive single authority was foreign to their temper. The instinctive opposition of the tribes to royalty finds vivid expression in Jotham's fable (Jud. 9 8–15), and in the address attributed to Samuel as a revelation from Yahweh, though in reality the bitter fruit of later experience (1 Sam. 8 11–18). Kingship implied subjection, the submission of the individual to one executive will, empowered to enforce obedience. The Israelite, descended from untamed nomads, did not willingly surrender his freedom of action.

To fuse these resistive and conflicting elements within and among the tribes, and weld them into a nation, was not an easy task; and Saul succeeded only in part. The mettlesome warrior-king, whose badge of office was his spear, proved himself a sufficient leader of his people against a foreign enemy; but a more complex problem awaited him at home, beyond his power to solve. The skill was denied him, out of the intractable material which necessity had thrust into his hands, to fashion a new structure fitted to endure. Untried, a pioneer, and having to create, Saul failed to wrest from the turmoil of his years the plenary power that should be vested in a king; and the kingdom, whose foundation was laid in a need of which he was but the instrument, he was unable to organize and consolidate. His failure was due in part to his personal misfortunes. The gathering melancholy that obscured his vision likewise unnerved his arm. Moreover, he had reason to fear the luminous young Judahite, once his trusted armor-bearer, now his declared rival in popular favor and support; for as the star of David rose to increasing brilliance, the lesser light of Saul waned steadily to extinction. The work that Israel's first king began but could not complete required for its accomplishment the genius of one greater than Saul.

Conditions of life in Israel as Saul grappled with them were still in flux. Old forms were proving inadequate; a new order awaited the master hand. Shepherds and farmers occupied highlands and plains; Israelites were merging with Canaanites, but they had not yet penetrated the larger cities, centres of industry and trade. On the edges hovered restive fellows, unable or unwilling to make a place for themselves in the existing confusion. Society was in transition; and Saul's talents as an administrator were not sufficient to bring the process to completion. Precisely these unstable conditions, however, furnished David material and scope for the exercise of his surpassing gifts.

The tragic career of Saul sets in sharp relief the checkered rise to fame and power of the young adventurer, with whom the king's own fate was linked disastrously. The favorite of fortune, who risks all and wins all, David is supremely a hero of romance. But equally in fact he was the consummate figure of his age. The story of David, best loved, most glorious of Israel's worthies, is one of the great achievements of Hebrew narrative art. Compound of legend and history in varying measure, it is wrought with all the dramatic skill, the power of characterization, the sense for movement and for the value of contrast, that the old story-tellers knew so well how to use. Shot through with rude humor, terrible passions, fine sentiment, and piety, it weaves its tissue out of the very fibre of the people. And in the person of David himself was embodied at that moment the spirit of his race.

The shepherd lad, the slayer of the Philistine giant, the pet of royalty, the invincible warrior outtopping the king himself, and the conqueror of all hearts, — it is a figure moulded of the plastic stuff of popular imagining. No less versatile, but of sterner substance, was the David of history. His facility in music, as it happened, brought him

a summons to the king. Straightway he won the royal favor, and therewith swift advancement, for Saul made the youth his armor-bearer, then captain of a thousand, then his son-in-law. David's success in war against the Philistines worked to his own hurt, for his fast-growing repute among the people roused the quick jealousy, embittered by malign suspicion, of the mercurial king. As Saul's title to the kingship rested in his personal strength and was rather the gift of the people than an inherited or inalienable right, he saw in David a dangerous rival, who might easily jeopardize his uncertain throne. Convinced by more than one token that Saul meant him serious harm, David fled the court, in effect an outlaw, fighting now for his own hand.

David turned southward to his home country. There he was joined by all his immediate kinsmen. His break with the king concerned more than his individual relation to Saul; it took on the importance of a tribal matter, one clan arraying itself against another. To avert Saul's vengeance which might be directed against all his house, he removed his father and mother to Mizpah in Moab, and placed them under the protection of the Moabite king. In the wilderness of Judah, David mustered a company of malcontents to the number of four hundred. These were a formidable force, but not his sole reliance. Abiathar, a priest of Nob, had escaped the massacre of his fellows by Saul, and he fled to David, bringing with him the instrument of the sacred lot. It was a fortunate stroke for David that he was able to attach Abiathar to his cause: he secured thereby recourse to the oracle of Yahweh, which he often consulted in his subsequent undertakings; furthermore, the presence of the priest in a sense legitimized his position as a rebel against the king, and it may have brought him some measure of support from those who still recognized the influence of the priest as dominant. David had with him also the

prophet Gad. In thus rallying to his person many different elements in the unstable kingdom, David made himself a menacing rival of Saul for the place of chief authority which might yet be within the power of the people to bestow.

The rebel maintained his band of outlaws in the desolate Judean country by raiding and petty war. But his footing was precarious. It was told him that the Philistines were fighting against Keilah and robbing the threshing floors. Forthwith, having received a favorable response from the oracle, he proposed an attack. His men objected, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines!" Between certainty of starvation in the wilderness and the hazard of death in battle there seemed little to choose. Assured a second time by the oracle, David fell upon the Philistines, delivered the city, whose inhabitants were of his own kin, and enriched himself with the plunder of the enemy. But other means of subsistence were presented on occasion.

A typical instance of the freebooter's life, vividly individualized in narration, was David's dealings with the wealthy ranchman Nabal, the Calebite. At the season of sheep-shearing, David officiously assumed protection of the workers, himself refraining from theft and guarding them from other raiders. For this volunteer service David demanded compensation, which the owner, a churlish person besides, naturally refused. "Who is this David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my wine and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men of whom I know not whence they be?" Evidently malcontents, such as David had recruited, were numerous in the land. Nabal's wife Abigail was more politic. Learning from one of her husband's men what had happened, she shrewdly, as Jacob once had sought to propitiate Esau,

despatched a handsome offering to the peremptory outlaw — two hundred loaves, two skins of wine, two sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. Then she set forth to meet David, even now coming down from his covert in the hills; and in an exchange of courtesies, a masterpiece of old Israelite ceremonious address, she was able to mollify his terrible anger. For girding on his sword, as did his men also, David had sworn to avenge the affront by Nabal which his own conduct had provoked. "God do so unto the enemies of David, and more also, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light so much as one man child!" But the tense will of the quarrelsome chieftain relaxed in the glow of a woman's look. Now Nabal, satisfied that his rebuff had disposed of the blackmailer, had given himself over to the revelry appropriate to the festival of sheep-shearing, and was feasting like a king; his "heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken." Not until the next morning, when the wine was gone out of him, did Abigail inform her husband concerning her manœuvre; "and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone." About ten days later Nabal died. David took the comely widow, as clever as she was rich, to wife; and by this alliance, he won for his cause the support of the powerful clan of Caleb.

Meanwhile all attempts of the king in person to capture David proved futile, for the caves and fastnesses of the wilderness offered the best of cover for the outlaw band. But the continued pursuit by Saul through territory whose inhabitants in loyalty to the king were ready to betray the fugitive, compelled David as a last desperate step to take refuge with the Philistines. As captain of a guerilla force which now numbered six hundred men expert in mountain fighting and swift forays, the Judahite rebel found welcome among Israel's hereditary enemies, who had need also to protect their bor-

ders against raiding tribes. Achish, king of Gath, in whose service David placed himself with his entire company, assigned him for a residence the town of Ziklag, far south in Philistine territory. From here David made war on tribes hostile to Israel, pretending before the king, however, that he was fighting against his own people. He brought back much booty of cattle and stuff, but slew all the men and women, that no one might betray his double-dealing to his Philistine lord. And Achish believed David, saying, "He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant forever." Though he secured the confidence of his master, the other Philistine princes distrusted the fidelity of the Hebrew vassal; and when their armies moved out to attack Israel, David, who was accompanying Achish, was compelled to return to Ziklag. Their suspicions were not unfounded. For instead of breaking with his kinsmen of Judah, David had striven to hold their good-will, protecting them from their enemies and bestowing on them presents from the booty which he took in his raids. Whether or not he was aiming immediately at the kingship, it was his consistent policy, though an outlaw over against the Benjaminite government of Saul, to prove himself the strong friend of Judah. His foresight was justified in the event.

David had no part in the battle in which Saul met his end. The manner of the king's death accorded with his service to Israel and symbolized his life of high expectancies whose issue was frustration. Amidst the ruin that swept away his army and bereaved him of three sons, Saul perished by his own hand in a losing fight with the Philistines. Not content with simple triumph, the victors despoiled and mutilated the fallen king, and hung his headless body on the walls of Beth-shan, at the Benjaminite frontier. But in the hour of su-

preme humiliation, Saul was lovingly remembered. The men of Jabesh in distant Gilead, whom he had valorously delivered in the early days, recovered the bodies of Saul and his sons and buried them with due honor under a sacred tree by their city. In spite of fatal defects of nature and the blows of evil fortune, Saul won the devotion of his people. David, fugitive, active rebel, and aspirant for the throne, could not renounce his loyalty to the king and his affection for the man. When chance had delivered into his power the royal pursuer who sought his life, David forbore to lay his hand on Yahweh's anointed (1 Sam. 26 and 24). At the moment his own ascendance seemed assured by the king's death, he thought only of the love he had to Saul; in hot anger he smote the messenger, who in hope of reward brought to David the king's crown and bracelet, with the tidings that he had himself given the death stroke. David with all his men mourned for Saul; and he uttered the lament, worthy alike of the singer and of the hero whose passing it commemorates:

> Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
> How are the mighty fallen!

The task which the needs of the time laid upon Saul exceeded his powers. He did not lack bravery or personal force; but his enthusiasm was not matched by ability to give his aspirations practical effect. Endowed with qualities of greatness, he failed of success. Against the dark confusion of his age, the embodiment of high hopes defeated, Saul stands out a figure of tragic grandeur, a symbol of Israel itself.

IX

HIGH NOON

The death of Saul left Israel at a parting of the ways. Manifestly the old organization of the tribes no longer sufficed in new conditions. Their integrity as a people threatened by absorption among the Canaanites, such independence as the more powerful tribes had won for themselves was menaced by the conquering advance of the Philistines. Yet the sense of tribal individuality was still acute, rendering difficult any practical union of rival groups. Could Israel, tenacious of ancestral habit, adapt itself to a form of control which was contrary to its disposition and customary manner of life?

Saul's kingdom, though far exceeding in scope the authority of a tribal chieftain, was limited in extent and weakly held; and his venture ended in defeat. But his example showed the necessity as well as the advantages of kingship. Now to complete Saul's work, there was need of a shaping mind and a strong hand. The range of David as rebel and free lance had been made possible by the prevailing disorder; and the support he drew to his cause was a sign of the popular unrest. Saul was unable to coerce conditions, even if he saw the end to be achieved; he was but king in name. David made himself king in fact; and the resistive elements which eluded Saul's grasp yielded to his mastery. It was a turning point in the development of Israel that David proved to be the strong man whom the times required.

David was endowed superlatively with all the needful qualities of leadership. Magnetic, he was a born ruler of men, compelling to himself their devoted enthusiasm. Great in his faults as in his virtues, he was altogether human and engaging. At once shrewdly selfish and

generous-hearted, he was designing even in his magnanimity. Worldly in his ambitions, he was devout after the fashion of his time; and he knew besides how to turn religion to practical ends. Poet and musician, he was no less a hardy fighter, the bravest among the people. Taking quick advantage of every occasion, he was also able to create opportunity; that he could give fullest scope to his powers was due to his imaginative vision and dominating will. The daring, clever adventurer proved himself to be a far-sighted and constructive statesman. In David was embodied the utmost of political competence of which Israel was ever capable. His rearing of the kingdom and his administering of it exemplified the highest that Israel could accomplish of success as a nation among the nations.

Upon the death of Saul, the little kingdom which he had assembled loosely fell apart. Such authority as the king was able to bequeath passed to his weakling son, Ishbaal. Attended by the remnants of the Israelite army, Ishbaal took refuge in Gilead, for the old territory of Benjamin had come into possession of the Philistine conquerors. At Mahanaim across the Jordan, Abner, captain of the host and still faithful to the house of Saul, proclaimed Ishbaal king over Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin — that is, all Israel; only the house of Judah followed David. But it was an empty title. The Philistine occupation of Benjamin had thrust a wedge between north and south; and Judah, ever separate in feeling from the tribes of Israel, broke away from its lax union with the realm of Saul. In the confusion that followed the ruin of the Benjaminite king, David was able to return to his home country; and quitting the Philistine service, the powerful outlaw captain with his entire company established his residence at Hebron. "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." As in the case

of Saul, election proceeded from the people; they chose from among themselves the warrior who had shown by his personal courage and skill the greatest capacity for leadership in arms.

The new kingdom was a rival kingdom. Since the entrance of all the Hebrew clans into Canaan, the dominant rôle among them had fallen always to one or another of the northern tribes. To them, the nucleus of the later nation, had been entrusted in the wilderness the secret of Yahweh, in its pristine simplicity and virtue. Among these tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, as the largest and most favored of all, exercised the greatest influence. At one crisis in their common fortunes, responding to the summons of the Ephraimite prophetess Deborah, it was the little tribe of Naphtali that took the lead. And latest of their heroes was a man of Benjamin, their first king. But Judah, with its affiliated clans of the southern desert, had pressed into Canaan along a different way; there separated from the Israelite tribes by a chain of Canaanite cities, it lived a life apart. Only with the rise of David was Judah able to challenge the predominance of the north. Now as between Judah and Benjamin in their pretensions to the rule over Israel, legitimacy was on the side of Ishbaal, rightful heir to the kingdom founded by his father, Saul.

Though David was chosen by his clansmen king of Judah with due ceremony, his sole reliance, if his authority were questioned, was his personal following of seasoned fighters. In order further to secure his position, he sought to conciliate the adherents of the Benjaminite kingdom. With a finesse that marked all his handling of men, he sent messengers to the people of Jabesh in Gilead, ever deeply and at the last so touchingly loyal to Saul, ostensibly to thank them for their devoted service to the dead king. But David took occasion also to remind them that Saul was indeed dead, and that the men of Judah had anointed himself to be king — able therefore to do well by

them, and so disposed. It may be inferred that David calculated the impression which this notable example of his good intentions might make on the northern tribes.

Diplomacy alone, however, was not enough to win over the immediate supporters of Ishbaal; and matters came to an open break. In the armed conflict that ensued, the Judahites were victorious. During the fight, Abner, though reluctantly, struck down the brother of David's captain Joab, and thus drew upon himself blood-guiltiness, which he was afterwards to requite with his own life. At this juncture Abner stands out as the commanding figure on the Israelite side. Veteran warrior and practical man, he was both king-maker and the power behind Ishbaal's uncertain throne. A quarrel with his liege, the shadow king, concerning a concubine of Saul, threw him into David's camp. The disaffection of Abner was a serious blow to Ishbaal; for such was his influence in the northern kingdom that he was able to persuade the elders of Israel with him to acknowledge David's sovereignty. But the move cost him dearly. In Hebron, where the grizzled soldier, bearing the proffered fealty of Israel, was welcomed with ceremonious feasting by the Judahite king, he was murdered in the gate by Joab, avenging a brother's blood. Abner's taking-off struck panic into the Benjaminite court. It was manifest the tide had set toward David and was flowing irresistibly. In the utter confusion beyond Jordan, two captains of the royal guerilla bands, hoping to catch step with the winning cause, assassinated Ishbaal and brought his head to the rival king in Hebron. The reward of their treachery and violence was instant death, ordered by the righteously incensed David. The king decreed a general mourning for Abner, with rending of clothes and girding on of sackcloth. In person David followed the bier, chanting a lament of his own poetic devising; and he fasted all day till sundown. "And all the people

took notice of it; and it pleased them. . . . So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner." With equal piety David caused the head of Ishbaal to be buried in Abner's grave in Hebron. Thus in the most public and impressive manner, the king disclaimed all responsibility for the death of Abner and of Ishbaal. The anointed of Yahweh should be clear of all suspicion, though the favorite of fortune need not hesitate to profit by events which redounded so vastly to his advantage.

The episodes thus summed up in the acts of a few leading personages doubtless spanned a long period of civil war, accented by individual blood-feuds and ruthless murders. The turmoil of the time was part cause and part effect of the transition through which Israel was passing. The king had still to win the power that should belong to royalty. His authority had not yet superseded the law of tribal custom; and decision affecting the general welfare was still referred to the elders of the people. Apparently no taxes were levied upon the group to maintain the royal establishment, simple as it was; the necessary revenues of the government were supplied from the booty taken in raids: this much of old tribal practice was not forgotten. So Ishbaal had his guerilla bands; and the servants of David brought in great spoils from their forays. The mainstay of the throne was the body of armed troops, attached to the person of the king. Their leaders exercised a practical control that might equal the authority of the king himself, who was therefore dependent on their support. Without Abner, his captain of the host, Ishbaal was altogether helpless. Even David was forced to complain: "I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah [Joab and his brother, David's officers] are too hard for me." Otherwise, the king's establishment was modest in the extreme. Ishbaal's guardian of his door was a woman; and she was engaged while on duty, per-

haps as a function of her office, in cleaning wheat. Saul, though surpassing the tribal chieftains in the extent of his rule, hardly exceeded them in dignity. And David at Hebron achieved little more of kingly estate. In the stress of constant warfare with the partisans of Saul's house and with the Philistines, he seems to have attempted no thorough-going organization of his Judahite kingdom. His work for all Israel lay before him.

The death of Abner and of Ishbaal left the northern kingdom wholly without leadership or support. The events which followed thereupon were momentous in the result, though their precise order is uncertain. David was chosen king of all Israel. He beat back the Philistines. He captured the city of Jerusalem and made it the capital of the nation. Whatever the relation among them, these three manœuvres worked together to lift Israel to the height of its worldly power.

It is written in the Hebrew narrative: "All the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Yahweh: and they anointed David king over Israel." The brevity of the notice withholds the full import of the action it records. In a small land on the frontiers of two empires, the elders of a few insignificant tribes gathered to choose a king by a method of their own. Kingship as Israel fashioned it was unique among contemporary nations. In Egypt and Babylonia, the origin of the royal office and attributes receded into the unknown past; by continuous increase of his prerogatives from time immemorial, the monarch had become the vicegerent of deity itself and in his own person divine. Now with the simple tribes of Israel, kingship was a new institution, wrought out of immediately pressing needs. Modelled upon a form ready to their hand, it differed from its world-old

prototype in that it was a creation from below, proceeding from the people. As the narrative here declares, it lay within the power of the elders to delegate their authority to one whom they raised up to be king over them by their own free act and choice. Thus the monarchy received its sanction by mutual consent; and the relations between king and people were defined by a covenant affirming their reciprocal rights and obligations. Throughout the nation's history, the king, though sacrosanct as Yahweh's anointed, never became in the traditional absolute sense *divine*. He reigned by the favor of Yahweh and the people's will. Even Solomon's arbitrary rule, which aimed to rival the despotism of imperial potentates, could not wrest from the people their right to ratify the accession to the throne. At his death, "all Israel" assembled to make his son Rehoboam king; and the negotiations that followed left an entire freedom of action with the people. The manner of David's election to the kingship and the covenant which sanctioned it were profoundly characteristic of the democratic temper that gave direction to Israel's development as a nation.

David's authority now far surpassed the limited sway of Saul. He further consolidated his kingdom by centralizing the government in a city-capital. The ancient Canaanite fortress of Jerusalem, a moment of whose long history was recorded in the Amarna letters, had maintained itself against the Israelite invasion for two hundred years. So great was its natural strength, the saying was current that the lame and the blind sufficed to defend it. Nevertheless, David succeeded in capturing the city, whether by stratagem or superior force, by siege or direct assault, a considerable military feat. Once in possession, David chose the citadel crowning one of its hills as his residence. His wisdom was abundantly justified. For the importance of Jerusalem to his kingdom, and as it proved, in the whole history

of the Hebrew people, was immense. A natural fortress posted in the centre of Canaan, the city commanded the great highways of trade and conquest northward or southward, and also the east and west road from Joppa to Jericho. Standing midway between the northern and the southern Hebrew groups in neutral territory which had formerly divided them, it was well suited to become the capital of the united Israelite and Judahite kingdom, without jealousy on either side; and as it had no associations or traditions pertaining to any of the tribes, it was the more easily identified with the dynasty and the nation that David was in process of creating. Moreover, Jerusalem provided what before the tribes had lacked, a centre which gathered to itself all activities of national concern. From here radiated the strands of administrative control, and here was the core of a new social organization. The practical union of all the tribes, the goal toward which they had been striving from the troubled days of the Judges, was achieved. The nation had its rallying-point in the capital at Jerusalem.

Hitherto a centre of communal interest within each little group had been the sanctuary, where all the people met for worship with sacrifice and general feasting. Now the political ties that David was weaving through the nation were as yet less compelling than the primal bond of religion. To assure the prestige of the new capital, it was necessary to link it up with old associations and the sentiment of custom. The royal residence must have its sanctuary. A masterstroke of policy was David's resolve to install at Jerusalem the Ark of Yahweh, God of hosts. In all the varied fortunes of the tribes, no object related with their common worship was so venerable. Fashioned, so tradition told, in the wilderness, it had led the fathers triumphantly into the promised land. Calamity, indeed, had befallen it, and of late years the Ark had suffered neglect. In the battle and

rout at Aphek, it was lost to the victorious Philistines. But it brought disaster to its captors, and they despatched it from their borders, though not beyond their control. Within Canaanite territory not far from Jerusalem, for a generation it had lain inaccessible. David's victories over the Philistines restored the Ark to Israel. Thereupon to draw it forth from its eclipse was to add the lustre of its immemorial sanctity and virtue to the new kingdom.

With the utmost possible impressiveness, attended by the army and the people, David went to fetch the shrine from its resting-place and bring it up to Jerusalem. Laying the hallowed chest with due ceremony upon a new cart drawn by oxen, the company set forward in festal procession to the beat of tumultuous music of all manner of instruments. But Yahweh interposed. Along the rock-strewn way the oxen stumbled. One of the drivers, putting out his hand to steady the sacred burden, was struck dead. So the Ark had lost nothing of its terrible holiness, its power to harm. Nor its power to bless as well. For when David, warned by this manifestation of Yahweh's displeasure, broke off his undertaking and left the Ark in the house of Obed-edom, a Philistine residing in Jerusalem, then Yahweh blessed Obed-edom and all his house. After three months, hearing of the prosperity that the Ark had brought to the Philistine sojourner, David was encouraged to renew the fateful enterprise. Once more, with the Ark borne on men's shoulders, the procession moved up the winding rough ascent to the citadel joyously, with shouting and the sound of trumpets; and the king himself, clad only with a linen apron, danced before Yahweh with all his might. Arrived at the summit, where the Ark was bestowed within the tent prepared for it, David offered sacrifices and blessed the people in the name of Yahweh of hosts; and with regal bounty he dealt out largesses of bread, cakes, and wine to all the multitude, both men and women.

The king was still close to the people. The bringing up of the Ark to furnish forth the royal sanctuary was a matter of general popular concern. The bearing of the shrine was entrusted, not, as its sacredness would seem to have required, to the priests, but to David's personal followers, his "chosen men"; and all the people shared in the ceremonies, not as mere onlookers but with active collaboration. David's own part is especially noteworthy. As leader of the people he directed the proceeding, as chief among them he offered sacrifice, as king over them he dispensed bounty; but as participant in the ecstatic abandon of rejoicing, he was one with them. The figure of the half-naked warrior, whirling and leaping in a frenzy of enthusiasm before the Ark in its progress through the thronging streets, had little of traditional kingly dignity. David's wife, peering down through her lattice upon the mad scene, furnished the comment of one detached from its excitements — who had, besides, as the daughter of the Benjaminite Saul, no sympathy with the politic designs of the Judahite hero and favorite. "How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!" At this moment Israel was still true to ancestral type. The Ark was the palladium of fighting tribes. The properties attaching to it were the conceptions of a primitive race, who saw in the sacred chest the actual and present power of a god of the hosts of war. David, foremost among the people but not remote from them, was able to shape the old material to new ends. In recovering the Ark, he stirred the deepest instincts of the tribes, reviving ancient memories of triumphs. By exalting it at the capital to a position of supremacy equalling its former glories, he captured the quick imagination of the people, and by his demeanor as still one of them, he gained their affection for the kingdom.

At Jerusalem, David organized his government. Somewhat of the democratic spirit of the tribal system was carried over into the kingdom, with a change only of outer form. As in the old days of equality between man and man, so now between king and people was no impassable cleft. The king himself, as formerly the elders, pronounced justice in the gate, though David toward the end of his reign, if the demagogic appeal of the rebel Absalom can be trusted, seems to have neglected this function of his office. In the affair of Bathsheba and the devious murder of Uriah, David acted like a typical Oriental despot. But this was by exception, for the king in Israel, even though a David, still conformed to the pattern of the tribal chief. The monarch was accessible at all times to any of his subjects. David accepted rebuke by the popular conscience speaking through the prophet Nathan, with a humility not usual with sovereigns. The wise woman of Tekoa was admitted to his immediate presence to plead her cause before him. Even Shimei with curses on his lips and violence in his hands was allowed to approach the king. Israel never wholly surrendered its immemorial right of free speech, of which later the prophets were shining exemplars.

But the kingdom that David was rearing out of the local groups and by conquest required a more complex administration than served for the separate tribes. To meet growing demands, officials were appointed to share the labors of the king. The recorder or remembrancer brought before him all business of state needing his personal attention. The scribe was entrusted with the royal correspondence, as in the stirring days of the Amarna letters; and he may also have prepared the annals, such as are often referred to in the Book of Kings. In another respect the new kingdom took pattern from the example of ancient despotisms: David seems to have instituted the labor-gang in Israel, for among his officials was an overseer of the

"men subject to task-work." Greatest of ceremonious occasions was worship. The king himself indeed might offer sacrifice. But with increase of royal grandeur, as the capital was drawing larger numbers of the people to itself and the sanctuary there gained preëminence in the land, David appointed for its service a company of priests, among them his own sons. Prophets too attained official station; attached to the court as David's "seer," the prophet Gad was consulted in matters of great moment. Thus David, skilfully using the old material of familiar custom, yet gave it heightened effect; and with it he blended new institutions modelled upon other kingdoms.

These forms and instruments of government which David was creating, could not be imposed from above upon the people without resistance. So irksome to their free spirit was the system of forced labor that only a generation later, on the death of the luxurious Solomon, the people rose in open rebellion against the burdens laid upon them by the tyranny of kings. The Israelites, loving liberty, were not to be made over in an instant by royal decree. Yet with the lapse of years, the powers vested originally in the tribal elders were usurped by the officials of the court, with whom access of authority led to its abuse. Gradually, too, an aristocracy based on wealth and royal favor superseded the old popular social forms. The long conflict that ensued between rich and poor, the privileged and the oppressed, in which the people found their champions in the prophets, was the most characteristic episode of Israelite history. The organization of the government and court by David marks the beginning of the struggle.

To maintain his own sovereignty as well as to secure his kingdom against enemies from without, David refashioned the armed forces of the nation. Formerly, all the tribesmen able to wield spear or

bow or sling went forth, led by their chieftain, to fight at need, whether in a raiding party, in a tribal quarrel, or in self-defence; the battle decided, they returned again to their flocks or fields. Saul was the first of the leaders of Israel to marshal a standing army. David, king at Jerusalem, not only extended the organization begun by Saul, but established it upon a different basis, working from the centre outwards. To recruit a permanent militia among the tribes, he took a census of the people; enrolling thus all men liable for duty, he appointed over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. Therewith, for the immemorial volunteer system he substituted compulsory service. These forces, subject to muster against external foes, provided for national defence and made possible such limited foreign conquest as Israel was able to effect. But David's first care was to assure the power of the king. The nucleus of his army was the royal bodyguard of six hundred men, composed in part of David's followers in his outlaw days. Numbered among the bodyguard also were the Cherethites and Pelethites; and a force of six hundred Philistines were quartered in Jerusalem immediately at the king's call. Still closer to David was a *corps d'élite* of the thirty "mighty men," to whom are attributed deeds of especial valor in his service. Like this corps of heroes, the troops of foreign mercenaries who made up the bodyguard were distinguished from the old levies of the tribesmen by their exclusive devotion to the person of the king. As they were without tribal affiliations in Israel, they could be counted on, as events proved, to support the king against any group among the people who might seek to resist the royal authority. To bind the army further in personal loyalty, David appointed as his chief officers, attached to the court, either his immediate kinsmen, like his nephew Joab, general of the militia, or clansmen of Judah, like Benaiah, commander of the Cherethites and Pelethites, — men on whose

devotion to himself he could rely in any crisis. Thus was drawn in the nation a different line of cleavage: no longer tribe against tribe, but the king against the people.

With a shrewd disposal of the resources of his kingdom, David invested royalty with a new pomp. The tent or village house that had sufficed for Saul no longer befitted the residence of a king. So David ordained a palace in the citadel. As the skill to build it was lacking among the farmer and shepherd tribesmen of Israel, he drew upon the opulence of ancient Tyre, whose king graciously sent cedar trees and masons and carpenters to frame a worthy dwelling for his fellow monarch of the kingdom but just now taking shape in Canaan. Established in his capital, David, as suited his expanding dignity, added numerously to his harem — according to the manners of the time, a sign and measure of royal greatness. While still in Hebron, he had six wives, who bore him six sons. At Jerusalem he took yet other wives and ten concubines; here sons, of whom eleven are named, and daughters were born to him. The princes had their separate establishments, distinct from the king's palace. When on occasion royalty made appearance before the people, it was attended with a flourish of magnificence. Absalom and Adonijah, rebelling against the king their father, prepared themselves chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before them. By comparison, Gideon at his threshing, the outlaw Jephthah, even Saul driving his father's oxen, receded into an obscure past whose distance from the glitter of this moment was not gauged by the lapse of years.

In his palace David dispensed hospitality with regal generosity. Not only the officials of the court ate at his table. Thither were bidden guests whom the king wished to honor: thus David assigned a place to the cripple Meribaal, son of the friend of his youth, Jonathan, and grandson of Saul, though his piety toward the memory of

Saul may have been tempered in this instance by a reasonable prudence. The table was spread abundantly; and feasting was enlivened by the music of singing men and women. In elaborating the style of his court, David might emulate the example of the Canaanite city-kings; but their wealth, amassed in centuries of trade and handicraft, far exceeded the produce of the simple Israelite folk, however much the national revenues might be increased by the booty of petty wars. Of direct contact with the secular elegance of Egypt and Babylonia or the rising power of Assyria, there is no trace. It remained for Solomon to bring Israel into the circle of the nations on anything like equal terms.

The splendor of surface that David laid upon court and capital had a basis in solid achievement for the nation. Swept forward by his far-seeing energy, Israel was fast becoming the dominant power in Canaan; for David not only had united the tribes as never before, under his centralized government, but he also greatly extended the boundaries of his kingdom and imposed the will of Israel upon neighboring peoples. His first task, to ensure the integrity of the nation, was definitely to check the advance of the Philistines, which for nearly a century had threatened the independence of the tribes; and in this, after a series of battles, he was completely successful. The Philistines retained their original territory along the coast; but their might as conquerors in the land was broken. Undisputed master in central Canaan, therefore, David had now to secure his eastern borders. Beyond the Dead Sea he smote the Moabites, ancestral enemies of Israel, putting to death two thirds of the people, and he compelled the nation to pay tribute. In the days of Eglon, whom Ehud slew, the relations were reversed. A more formidable undertaking was the campaign against the Ammonites, whose territory lay north

of Moab. Already Saul had defeated them in delivering from their hands the city of Jabesh-gilead; but their king Nahash had shown kindness to David, rebel against Saul. On the death of Nahash, David sent his servants to comfort the new king of Ammon concerning his father. But the Ammonites, pretending to regard the emissaries as spies, treated them with extreme indignity. The only possible rejoinder was war. Knowing the power of Israelite arms, the offenders summoned aid of the Arameans, their neighbors on the north, a people of Semitic stock settled in the region whose chief city was Damascus. In the first campaign, David's general Joab defeated their combined forces in the field; and the following year, after a siege, he took the Ammonite capital. The inhabitants of the city were brought away to do forced labor; besides the rich spoils which the victors gathered, the country was laid under tribute. Meanwhile David, at the head of an army levied among all the people, went out against a coalition of Aramean princes. In a battle east of the Jordan he routed the enemy and made their cities subject to Israel. Finally David carried war into Edom, far to the south. He set garrisons in the country, gained possession of two ports at the head of the Red Sea, and won control of trade routes passing through Arabia.

As a result of these wars, waged in the first half of his reign, David, though strictly in possession only of former Israelite and Judahite territory, extended the authority of his kingdom from the borders of the Philistines and the Phœnicians on the west to the desert beyond Jordan on the east, from the Red Sea and the southern wilderness northward to the region of Damascus. The royal treasury was enriched by tribute and by booty, gold, silver, brass, and precious stones; horses and chariots captured from the enemy equipped the king's guard. Moreover, David's conquests opened to Israel the highways of foreign commerce. The wealth thus suddenly pouring

into the kingdom and access to the products of other, more highly developed nations flowered in the grandiose luxury of Solomon. Yet the Israelites, though stout fighters on occasion, were not by nature a conquering people. At the outset, they won their footing in Canaan by spear and bow; for two centuries they had to maintain themselves by readiness to repel attack; the hazards of war lifted David to his present eminence. But once the Israelites were established on the soil, warfare was not their trade nor lust of power their dominant passion. Their own small land, with its varied climate and topography, answered the needs of a shepherd and farmer folk. Limited to petty rivalries among the tribes, their world outlook was a narrow one. Israel, exclusive, self-sufficient, had no desire to subject alien peoples to its control, and lacked besides the skill to organize and administer a great empire. It was due to the innate qualities of the tribes, that the kingdom which the unique genius of David called into brief being survived its creator but a generation. On the death of his son Solomon, the nation parted, rent by forces from within.

As against other peoples in contact with them, the tribes of Israel stood forth a united nation. Their rapid rise to dominion under David, following the tentatives of Saul, woke in them a consciousness of political solidarity, different from the old tribal ties of kinship; and their union in a monarchy conferred upon them a truly national existence. The Hebrew newcomers into Canaan, though modified in the process, had finally absorbed the earlier resident population. At first the invaders, when victorious in arms, had put the conquered to the sword. Then followed in the period of the Judges a time of gradual adjustment, by treaty, by intermarriage, and by the natural fusion of two peoples dwelling side by side with common interests and occupations. Saul, indeed, had proved faith-

less to an old treaty with the Gibeonites and sought to slay them. But in general Israel had won its dominance in Canaan by less sudden and violent means. David felt himself sufficiently master of the situation to spare the Jebusite inhabitants of Jerusalem, when he captured the city; and he enlisted in the service of the king and the state many foreigners, among them a man of the Hittites, who once had contended with the might of Egypt for suzerainty in Canaan. Under David the century-long transition was virtually complete. The invaders had fused with the native peoples; and the resultant was known as *Israel.* No less, the independence of the Israelite state was recognized by neighboring powers. When David defeated the league of Aramean princes, another Aramean king, hostile to them, sent his son with rich presents to felicitate his fellow monarch of Israel on his victory. The king of Tyre, with friendly understanding between equals, supplied David with workmen and materials for building the royal palace at Jerusalem. And it was as one sovereign to another that David despatched ambassadors to the king of Ammon on a mission of diplomatic courtesy. So Israel rose into its place among the nations.

But as always, disruptive forces were at work within. The tendency to division, ever characteristic of the tribes, was too strong for even the compelling genius of David to master wholly. When Absalom, eldest of David's sons, in rebellion against his father, sought to make himself king, he established headquarters at Hebron, counting on the disaffection of Judah to aid his designs. For the Judahites felt that David, though of their own bone and flesh, had not accorded them the recognition they deserved in the nation; and jealous of the northern tribes, they might well have resented the transfer of the royal seat from Hebron to Jerusalem. Also the Ben-

jaminites, loyal to the memory of their first king, were never fully reconciled to the rule of David. The princeling Meribaal, grandson of Saul, whom David had attached to his own household, refused to leave Jerusalem, when David fled the city in fear of Absalom; for he thought: To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. All the grievances of Benjamin found voice in Shimei, a man of the family of Saul, who came out to meet David in his flight, and cast stones and dust at him and curses: "Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and base fellow: Yahweh hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned!" A more significant instance of the mutual jealousies of the tribes and their lack of devotion to the united kingdom was the quarrel between Israel and Judah, when David, upon Absalom's death, returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

Now Israel had fled every man to his tent. And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land from Absalom. And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? . . . Ye are my brethren, ye are my bone and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? . . . And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent unto the king, saying, Return thou, and all thy servants. So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to bring the king over Jordan. . . .

So the king went over to Gilgal: and all the people of Judah brought the king over, and also *half the people of Israel.* And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have

our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and brought the king, and his household, over Jordan, and all David's men with him? And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift? And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

Among the first to welcome David was the malcontent Shimei, who had dared to curse the king when he was in flight; and with Shimei were a thousand Benjaminites. Meribaal also hastened to atone for his former disloyalty. But the quarrel between Israel and Judah on the occasion of the king's return furnished opportunity to another Benjaminite, Sheba by name, to sound again the call to rebellion:

> We have no portion in David,
> Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse:
> Every man to his tents, O Israel!

Whereupon all the men of Israel left David and followed Sheba: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem. That the revolt was speedily crushed but throws into sharper relief the ready fickleness of the tribes. Quick to take offence, their inconstant spirit was as quickly appeased. But always acutely jealous of their own rights, the tribes were not willing to merge individual differences in common action and permanent union.

Working with intractable material, David lifted Israel to a wealth and power of which indeed its past had held little promise. Yet even in this culminating hour of noontide, the nation which he moulded to unwonted greatness still bore the stamp of its origins. As the outer

forms of tribal organization had impressed themselves upon the kingdom, so also the inherent character of the race was reflected in the manners of the time. The people that had in its keeping the secret of Yahweh was still very human. Except for a reaching out after the one God, except for a moral sense which seems to have been innate but was unfolding slowly, Israel had not yet passed the level of contemporary peoples.

The story of David's reign in its personal aspects is a tale of elementary passions hardly restrained. Lust, adultery, and incest touched the highest personages of the court. David himself was notably unscrupulous; and the prince Amnon was a flagrant offender. Utter disregard of the rights of others, characteristic of those who had the means to carry out their wills, was exemplified by the hot-mettled Absalom. In disgrace with his father, the young prince summoned the royal general-in-chief Joab to his presence, once and again. When the old warrior refused a second time to come, Absalom commanded his servants to set fire to Joab's field of barley. The incident is not without a kind of rough humor; for Joab seems not to have resented too much Absalom's peremptory methods, but came and did the prince's bidding. Cruelty toward a foreign enemy was usual in war. But David did not spare his own subjects; without demur he gave over the sons of Saul to the terrible vengeance of the Gibeonites. Another time, to escape the consequences of his private wrong-doing, he contrived the death in battle of one of his ablest and most loyal officers. But common murder as well was rife in atrocious forms. The rude temper of the people found embodiment at its fiercest in the grim soldier Joab, the king's mainstay of force. With no outrage of the conscience of the period, Joab slew Abner in the city gate, in revenge for his brother's death. His horrid murder of Amasa had less justification, though equally it went unpunished.

Goaded by jealousy and defeated ambition, for the king had set Amasa in Joab's place as captain of the host, the old general took Amasa unawares by the ruse of a concealed weapon. With a gesture as if to greet him, Joab smote his rival in the body and shed his bowels to the ground; and he left him wallowing in his blood in the midst of the highway. One of Joab's followers, less hardened than his chief, carried the body out of the highway into a field and covered it with a garment. Law and order of the state had not yet supervened upon the wild justice of the old heroic days; and grievous wrongs were punished, if at all, by the tribal custom of individual revenge. So Absalom, for the injury done to his sister, lured the offender into his power by deliberate treachery; and when Amnon's heart was merry with wine at a feast of sheep-shearing, Absalom by the hand of his servants struck him down, his half-brother. To escape the anger of the king, the only reckoning that he feared, Absalom fled the kingdom.

These of course are the deep shadows. Out of the welter of violence and evil emerge bright generous deeds of knightly souls. David magnanimously pardoned the base dog Shimei, who had assailed Yahweh's anointed with stones and curses; the man in him rose superior to the king: and he accepted with fine humility the prophet's rebuke of his gross sin against the husband of Bathsheba. Climbing the steeps of success or chastened by misfortune, David revealed rare qualities of mind and heart; and lesser men, in acts of high devotion, were not unworthy of his example. Against the murky background of innate disposition and moral environment, Israel's achievements of the spirit are alight with the more unaccountable lustre.

David's last years were perplexed by filial rebellion and palace intrigues in contest for the throne, which the king's failing strength

would soon be forced to yield. The right of the eldest son to the succession was not yet established in Israel; as with the tribal sheikh, the king might appoint to his throne from among all his sons. Withal, appeal might still be made to the people for their concurrence and active support. So it was that Absalom sought to win popular favor for his pretensions. Furnished forth with the accoutrements of royalty, he stationed himself in the city gate and pleaded his own cause with each passer-by, to the derogation of the king. "Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man who hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" And it was so, that when any man came nigh to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Moreover, he sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom is king in Hebron." And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. The aging king was compelled to flee the capital and to seek refuge in loyal territory beyond Jordan. But with the violent death of the aspiring prince, which brought sorrow to his father, the revolt collapsed, and David returned to Jerusalem.

Adonijah, next in age to Absalom, ventured a similar attempt. Like his elder brother, and himself also a handsome princely figure, Adonijah prepared chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him. Dissensions at the court had alienated some of David's officers; and Adonijah persuaded to his cause the old general Joab, and the priest Abiathar, who had rendered special service to David in the early days of his rise to power. Calling all his brothers, the king's sons, except Solomon, and all the men of Judah — for again tribal divisions seem to have played a part — Adonijah at an ancient

sanctuary outside Jerusalem held a great sacrificial feast to impassion the crowd; and by the assembled company he was acclaimed king.

Still loyal to the weakened monarch, however, were the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, also Benaiah, captain of the mercenaries, and with him the king's bodyguard of "mighty men." Prime movers in the close intrigue that centred about Solomon to promote his claims against the manœuvres of Adonijah, now on the point of attaining quick success, were the royal mother Bathsheba and the sagacious Nathan. These two, working in collusion, drew from the dying king the formal declaration that Solomon should reign in his stead.

So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the Tent, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon! And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

By such means and after this manner was Solomon made king. Immediately it became evident that with his accession, kingship in Israel had entered upon a new phase in its rapid development since Saul left the driving of his oxen to bear faltering rule over the tribes. David, master of men, advancing swiftly to complete dominion, had yet governed with some regard for public opinion and individual rights. But Solomon straightway showed himself to be absolute. His first acts gave notice that the will of the king was the supreme law. In visiting summary punishment upon his former enemies, the young monarch moved less in fear of their present menace to his throne than in a spirit of arbitrary personal revenge. The rival

prince Adonijah, though he himself furnished a pretext which the new king was quick to turn to account, was struck down by the hand of Solomon's captain, Benaiah. And the veteran Joab, whose prodigious services to David in framing the monarchy counted for nothing against his recent support of the pretender, was slain even at the altar, where he had taken refuge; its sanctity was of no avail against the wilful vengeance of the king.

The work which David had accomplished by his creative genius profited all Israel no less than his own individual fortunes. For his authority and prestige increased directly with the increase of the nation. The kingship which centred in his person grew in importance according as he united the several tribes under his single rule and extended their borders by foreign wars, and as he enriched his people by the spoils of conquest and the gains of trade. At this moment the greatness of the nation determined the greatness of its king. To the solid achievement of David his son fell heir. But the power that David had won to the benefit of all Israel, Solomon now arrogated to himself as sole and supreme potentate, and he used it for his personal glorification. The advantage accruing to the nation from Solomon's magnificence was only incidental to the aggrandizement of the king.[1]

The reign of Solomon spanned a period of comparative peace. Edom rebelled and recovered its independence in part, though Israel still controlled the ports that gave access to the Red Sea. In Damascus, where David had stationed a garrison of his troops, a certain Rezon, adventurer and free lance like Jephthah and the young David, made himself king, in open hostility to Solomon; and he founded a dynasty which later came into frequent conflict with

[1] The example of Solomon might well have served to point the saying of Montesquieu: "Monarchy is destroyed when the prince, directing everything to himself, brings the country to the capital, the capital to his court, and the court to his own person."

Israel. In the south, Egypt, after two centuries of inaction, again made its might felt in Canaan; and the Pharaoh captured the old city of Gezer, which the Hebrew invaders had never been able to wrest from the Canaanites. This stroke, as it happened, turned to the advantage of Israel; for Solomon, marrying the Pharaoh's daughter, received Gezer as her dowry. Within the territory consolidated by the statecraft of his father, Solomon aimed to ensure Israelite domination in Canaan by building fortresses at strategic points, supported by garrisons and ample provisionment; the king also extended and strengthened the fortification of the citadel in Jerusalem. To the army as organized by David, he added numerous forces of cavalry and war-chariots, long since employed by Egyptians and Canaanites but new in Israel. By such dispositions Solomon secured for himself the freedom to put into effect the policies closest to his interests.

Israel, unlike the peoples kindred with it in race, produced few leaders of commanding military skill. To the extent that Solomon was not a conqueror but a shrewdly capable man of business, he, rather than David, represented in the magnified scale of his exalted station the part among nations played by Israel, a part unheroic and least considerable. For in the vast sweep of world-empires, this little nation of the coastland hardly counted politically. The inclusive genius of David shed lustre on Israelite prowess for but a moment of history. It suited better the temper of Solomon and the character of his people on its practical side to seek glory in riches rather than power and fame in war. Accordingly it was a congenial task for the young monarch to exploit the position which his father's labors had prepared for him; and he set himself to develop the material resources of the kingdom ready to his hand.

By a policy of foreign alliances through marriage, dictated alike by

his personal inclinations and by considerations of state, Solomon greatly enlarged Israel's contact with other nations in friendly intercourse and to its own benefit. It is related that Solomon loved strange women, and he took to himself many wives of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; notably he espoused the richly dowered daughter of the Pharaoh. These alliances, beyond the manifest political advantages they afforded the kingdom but newly arrived, also opened the way to exchanges both commercial and cultural between the simple Israelite folk on the one hand, and on the other, the highly mature civilizations of the north and east and the world-old opulent empire of Egypt. Solomon was quick to seize the opportunity that favoring circumstances placed within his reach. The lie of the land peculiarly facilitated the development of trade. The highways from Egypt and Arabia to the realms of the north and to Babylonia led across Canaan: so from the richly laden caravans that filed the length of his territory, the king of Israel was able, in return for protection accorded them, to exact heavy toll; and Solomon undertook large ventures on his own account. As middleman he forwarded a profitable traffic in horses and chariots between Egypt and the northern countries. With the help of his friend the king of Tyre, he maintained a fleet of trading ships, manned by Phœnician sailors, which brought back from distant voyages gold, silver, rare woods, ivory, and precious stones for the king's sumptuousness, and also — a revealing instance — apes and peacocks for the idle delight of royal favorites. In exchange for such articles of luxury Solomon could offer only the simple products of the soil, grain, wine, oil, and balsam, gathered by the dull labor of his subjects. With the increase of the king's repute abroad and of his resources at home, the breach between court and people was widening rapidly.

For the wealth that now flowed through the land finally streamed in upon the capital, to the sole magnificence of the monarch and his entourage. Solomon's profuse expenditures, suited rather to the scale of secular potentates than to the humble Israelite kingdom, bore little relation to the welfare of the people. The service which he was to render the nation in building for himself a chapel at Jerusalem he could hardly have intended or foreseen; that the Temple should become the refuge and rallying-point of a distressed and dispersed people lay yet in the future. In general, though Solomon's policies enlarged Israel's horizon, the extravagances of the vainglorious king worked added hardships rather than amelioration for the masses.

As the revenues of trade alone did not suffice for his regal lavishness, Solomon resorted to burdensome taxes and the coercion of labor. Twelve districts, into which the kingdom was divided without reference to the old cherished tribal groupings, administered not by the elders but by officials of the court, had each for a month to supply the needs of the king's prodigal establishment — food in vast quantities for his numerous household and throng of dependents, and likewise provender for the royal stables. The people must also have been compelled to furnish the enormous payments of grain and oil which Solomon made to the king of Tyre in return for his aid in the construction of the Temple and the palaces at Jerusalem, twenty thousand measures of wheat and twenty thousand baths of pure oil, year by year. Furthermore, in order to carry out his ambitious building projects, Solomon raised a forced levy of all Israel. The numbers cited by the historian doubtless are exaggerated as to the real facts, but they are true to the impression which so high-handed a proceeding made upon the nation. Thirty thousand were sent to cut timber in the forests of Lebanon. And Solomon had threescore and ten

thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand that were hewers in the mountains. Besides the king's chief officers charged with the general conduct of the work, there were three thousand three hundred overseers directly over the laborers. Chosen to be the servant of his people, the king in Israel was become their master.

In the result, so contrary to the temper and traditions of Israel were these measures of oppression that they entailed their own speedy retribution. The hardships of Solomon's rule bore more heavily upon the northern tribes, for Judah, whose services to David were remembered by his august son, was in part exempted from forced contributions. Not without reason, therefore, it was a man of Ephraim, one of the king's overseers risen from the ranks, who was to lead the revolt which, though the first attempt miscarried, cost Solomon's successor more than half his kingdom. The glory of Solomon was bought at the price of Israel's unity as a nation, leaving it powerless and a prey to more militant states.

Wealth and the worldly prestige attaching to it were so exceptional in the whole history of Israel that the riches of Solomon loomed out of all proportion, in the dazzled retrospect of less fortunate days. Even the writers closest in time to Solomon's reign shared the pride of his magnificence, ignoring the reverse side of the picture. The brilliance radiating from the court blinded the onlookers to the attendant shadows in which the people moved. But this view of the royal grandeur, however distorted in the vision of later generations, was true to its own near perspective; illusion was not mirage, but rose out of fact. Modest in comparison with Egypt or Babylonia, yet the splendor of Solomon was the greatest that Israel ever knew. The king did not stint expenditure, but took care only to make his wealth count visibly. With the love of display born of riches suddenly acquired, he bent his really great energies to erecting at Jeru-

salem sumptuous palaces, imposing halls of state, and the elaborately fashioned sanctuary of Yahweh — the whole with spacious outlying courts enclosed by a wall of heavy stones and cedar timbers. Seven years was he in building the Temple and thirteen years in rearing his palace. Upon the adornment and furnishing of the buildings was poured out the utmost of luxury at the monarch's command: immense blocks of hewn or sawed stone, pillars, panellings and carvings of cedar and olive-wood, inlays of ivory and precious stones, wrought gold, silver, and bronze, and rich embroideries, all were cunningly assembled to minister to the vanity of the king. The description of these marvels, as detailed in the narratives, taxes the extreme capabilities of a fervent imagination rioting in wonder and praise.

With due allowance for the pride of the historians, yet these monuments of royal glory stand in striking contrast to the humble condition of the people. Significant of the meagre resources of the kingdom as well as of the degree of culture at which Israel had so far arrived, is the fact that Solomon owed his triumphs at Jerusalem to assistance from abroad. His buildings, designed on foreign models — Egyptian influence working through Phœnicia — were constructed of foreign materials by foreign craftsmen. The extent of his indebtedness is indicated by the payments made to Hiram, king of Tyre. In addition to an annual return of great quantities of wheat and oil, Solomon was obliged to cede to his ally twenty cities in Galilee. The monarch despoiled his kingdom and embittered his people to enrich himself. The effulgence of a moment was swiftly overcast by cloud and storm.

The days passed prodigally at the capital. Though the people toiled obscurely, the court lacked nothing of the brilliance appropriate to so grandiose a setting. The numbers of the royal harem

were a gauge of the magnificence to which the king attained, no less than a witness to his personal predilections. The oriental temperament was incarnate in Solomon in its most florid exuberance. The foreign princesses of the palace, attended by their own retinue, worshipping their native gods with ceremonies pertinent to them, reflected upon the capital a shimmer of cosmopolitan distinction. The wit and wisdom of Israel's king, famed afar, attracted to his court illustrious visitors from distant lands. For a brief instant Israel held place in the circle of great nations. The material power and worldly repute of the kingdom were at flood tide.

In the reign of Solomon, for the first time since the tribes were settled on the soil of Canaan, access was made possible in any large measure to the wealth and culture of an elder world. Such contact was needed ultimately to assure the emergence of this small people into the ken of history. But this turn in the current of the nation's fortunes was not immediately decisive of great changes in the life of Israel. Whatever advantages resulted from Solomon's rule centred in the capital at Jerusalem; the mass of the people received no share in the riches that the king drew to himself. The changes that might have attended a wider outlook or followed the influx of new ideas encountered the conservative, exclusive temper of the tribes. The harsh procedures necessary to effect the king's policies conflicted sharply with the old tribal spirit of independence. Even more fundamental was their intolerance of foreign influences; and the real leaders among the people, striving to remain true to the faith of the fathers, resisted the perverting pressure of alien customs and ideas. But worldly power was the least of Israel's titles to remembrance. The true genius of this poor and unregarded people was a genius for spiritual truth; and the splendor-loving king did little to forward its

development. The greatness of Solomon passed, and left only a legend. He vastly embellished the court, and invested his person and name with a fabulous glory. The people throughout the land, dwelling in villages, remained keepers of sheep and tillers of the soil.

X

THE KING'S PEACE

It was not in the deeds of conqueror kings, not in the craft of builders and artists, that Israel found expression, but by the mouth of prophets, who were yet to come. These were the true representatives of its genius. The material of their teaching they drew from common experience, as the centuries had determined it; and they addressed their appeal to all the people in their familiar daily ways. Israel's national and personal character, which the prophets invoked to repentance and new effort, was forming in the period of the settlement and the early monarchy. From the beginning to the affluent years of Solomon, the workaday life of the Israelites showed them to be a people of narrow outlook, limited skill, and meagre resources. A life of toil, unlighted by the glamours of art, yet it was not lacking in variety or significance. And in the humble tasks and pleasures of the countryside are to be traced the influences that moulded the temper of Israel and shaped its history.

The Hebrew tribes had won their first footing in Canaan among the hills; only with the lapse of years had they spread down into the plains. The gradual transition from their desert way of life to new conditions and occupations proceeded at uneven pace, according to the region in which they found a lodgment. Some tribes on the borders of Canaan long retained their nomad habitudes. Others, in more fertile territories, learned to till the ground. Judah, less favored in the south country than the planters of Ephraim, gained a difficult livelihood by the tending of flocks. Until David captured Jerusalem, the Israelites had not completely penetrated the ancient fortified

cities, where dwelt the craftsman and the merchant. Among the farmer folk, trade was only barter; and of artisanship the Israelite peasant practised so much as sufficed for his private needs. The product of field or home-workshop offered little surplus for exchange with distant regions. Each group lived for itself. The circle of immediate interests defined its horizon; the neighborhood was its world.

In such little communities scattered over the land, the old tribal affiliations persisted as a memory. The original clan relationships, as the Israelites fused with the native farmer people, were merged in the ties of place. The smaller unit was still the family, for as yet the individual had no independent standing apart from his connections; the larger unit, instead of clan or tribe, came to be the neighborhood community. With the settlement of the invaders on the soil, the sheikh or tribal leader in the desert yielded his control to the elders. Not necessarily older men, the elders were heads of families, owing their influence to the esteem which attached to their wealth or personal qualities. The so-called Judges, who rose to leadership during the troubled period of the settlement, served an exceptional occasion; as single chieftains entrusted for the moment with supreme command, they had no fixed status in the system of local government. In ordinary times, though final action which concerned the general welfare lay with all the people, the elders served as their representatives in matters affecting the group as a whole or in dealings with other groups in external affairs. Their function within the community was mainly judicial, consisting in the task of decision and award. In especially difficult or important questions, that required reference to the deity for decision by the sacred lot, the judge was the priest, who had besides, in virtue of his office, great influence. The authority of the priest, however, rested upon a different basis

from that of the elders: the one reverted to the deity; the other proceeded from the people. The form of government in the local groups, therefore, was thoroughly democratic in spirit — the same spirit that expressed itself in the resistance of the people to the encroachments of the monarchy.

The social life of the community centred in the village or the larger town, located near some favoring spring of water, or on a hill for readier defence. By day the people went out to work in the fields; at evening they returned to the cluster of dwellings, huddled together for companionship and protection, which made their home. The little houses, with walls of sun-baked clay or rough stones, built around a bare earth floor, were usually one story in height, and often enclosed but a single room, where the family and its household animals found common shelter. The flat roof, reached by steps outside the wall, served many purposes. Here one might sleep, as Samuel lodged the young peasant Saul upon the housetop, and as a tent was spread there for Absalom when he seized the king's palace for his own residence. Here one laid out flax to dry, like Rahab in Jericho. A place of constant resort, the housetop furnished an excellent observation-point from which to overlook the doings of one's neighbors. An occasion of the sort once proved a fateful moment in the private life of David. Between the houses wound crooked streets, too narrow to afford more than mere passage. The only open space lay in the broad entering gate; and here the people gathered for affairs and sociable exchange. Here were the market and the court of law; the elders sat in the gate to pronounce justice. When the day's work was over, the villagers drifted to the broad place for idleness, for gossip, for news or entertainment, and to take note of any arriving stranger. All the little concerns of every day were public; life, intense and animated within its bounds, was lived in

common. Such homogeneous material readily received a single impress.

A scene from village life is limned in the story of the Levite, sojourning on the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim, who was fetching home his concubine after a visit with her father in Beth-lehem-judah. They were travelling, attended by his servant and with two asses, saddled, past Jerusalem, but would not turn in there because it was a city of the foreigners; and they pressed on toward Gibeah.

And he said unto his servant, Come and let us draw near to one of these places; and we will lodge in Gibeah, or in Ramah. So they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them near to Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. And they turned aside thither, to go in to lodge in Gibeah: and he went in and sat him down in the street of the city; for there was no man that took them into his house to lodge. And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even: now the man was of the hill country of Ephraim, and he sojourned in Gibeah; but the men of the place were Benjaminites. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the wayfaring man in the street of the city; and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah unto the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim; from thence am I, and I went to Beth-lehem-judah: and I am now going to the house of Yahweh; and there is no man that taketh me into his house. Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing. And the old man said, Peace be unto thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street. So he brought him into his house, and gave the asses fodder: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.

The whole narrative, so close to life, so vividly faithful to the manner of the times, is instinct with the very spirit of the old days. Here

the city of Jerusalem, still in possession of the Canaanites, is distinguished from the villages of the Israelites, such as Ramah, where Samuel dwelt, and Gibeah, the home of Saul. The old man is himself not a native Benjaminite, but a sojourner, a resident alien. Coming from his work out of the field at evening, he remarks the stranger in the street and befriends him to the full measure of his simple resources. The arrival of a stranger was an event of the first importance in these little communities of the countryside. And with all the means at one's disposal, hospitality was no more a duty than a privilege.

The labor of the Israelite peasants was not crushing. The household tasks, cooking, grinding meal, fetching water, spinning and weaving, fell to the women. Women also worked in the fields, and they tended sheep. Well-to-do families might have "bondservants" or slaves, but these did not carry the whole burden of labor for their masters. During the season of the crops, all the people alike shared in the work on the land; thus Saul, whose father was eminent for his wealth, drove the oxen at the plough. Planting was begun at the time of the early rains in November; the harvest, ripened by the latter rains, was gathered in April and May. A light plough, rudely fashioned of wood, drawn by oxen which were guided or urged by a long sharp-pointed goad — such as served Shamgar as a weapon for slaying six hundred Philistines! — sufficed to break the thin soil. Then followed the sower, scattering his seed broadcast. The ripe grain was cut by a sickle of flint or bronze. After the binders had gathered the sheaves, the field was opened to the gleaners, who were the poor and the sojourners. The threshing-floor, privately owned or common to the group, was a flat rock or depression of firmly trodden earth, usually on a hillside where the winds might sweep away

the chaff; and at the time of winnowing it was guarded against local thieves or marauding bands from the desert, who would reap where they had not sown. Of a harvest scene in ancient Israel: the owner of the field coming from the village to oversee the workers, mingling with them in friendly wise; the young men and maidens reaping; the gleaners following after; the vessels of water at hand, brought for the refreshment of the toilers; the noonday meal of bread and parched grain and sour wine; the winnowing in the threshing-floor at sundown; the eating and merriment when the day's work was ended; the master sleeping on watch by the heaped-up grain — of these, the Book of Ruth has preserved immortally an image. The shadows of the picture, the weary toil, the burden of the heat, the rude freedoms of men and women together in the fields, the excess of wine, are touched in faintly if at all. The civilities of intercourse as sketched in the bearing of the principal figures, appropriate as they are to such an idyl, are none the less true to the manners of the period. Labor in Israel had its lighter side and ameliorations.

On the stony slopes the peasants cultivated the grape with enthusiasm and devotion — notably in Judea, for it was Judah, in the patriarchal Blessing, who should bind his ass's colt unto the choice vine, who washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. The prophet Isaiah depicts the care lavished upon this rewarding labor. "My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a wine-press therein." The vineyard was walled in with stones and hedged about with thorns; the ground was well hoed, and the vines were pruned assiduously. "Before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the flower becometh a ripening grape, he shall cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and the spreading

branches shall he take away and cut down." The grapes were gathered in September; and as with the grain harvest, the gleaning was left to the poor. The treading of the wine-press was an occasion of high rejoicing, attended with singing and shouts and joyful noise. The feast of booths or ingathering, which signalized the completion of the vintage, was a great popular festival. Wine flowed plenteously in the familiar and ritual life of Israel.

Of hardly less importance than the vine, and widely cultivated, was the olive. These two, together with the fig — and opposed to the bramble — are imaged in Jotham's parable of the king, as the characteristic growth of Canaan: the fatness of the olive wherewith they honor God and man, the sweetness of the fig, and wine which cheereth God and man. The olive abundantly repaid the little labor of its cultivation. The tree was beaten, and gleaned, even for two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost branches. The fruit and its oil served many uses, for food, for light, for anointing. Prized by the rich, it was not wholly lacking in the poorest households. Gratefully remembering earth's bounty, Israel chose the fig-tree and the vine as a symbol of well-being and contentment.

Far different from the farmer's life was the life of the shepherd. His work was more dangerous and more constant. Unlike the peasant, he was not rooted to the land; but in less fertile regions, where the soil, too poor for grain or vine, yielded a scanty vegetation, he wandered in search of pasturage and water. His home was the sparsely peopled, barren hillsides of Judea and the tablelands east of Jordan. The prosperous ranchman, possessing large flocks, might reside in village or town, as did Laban and Nabal. So likewise in the story of Tamar and her daring venture (Gen. 38), Judah is figured as a town gentleman. He carried a staff, he wore a signet, and about

his neck hung a cord, for the signet or for an amulet or charm. When he visited his flocks at sheep-shearing, he must needs take a long journey into the hills. But such favored few throw into sharper relief the rigors of the shepherd's life. For the hireling, as also the humble keeper of sheep whose little flock was his own, fared arduously. He lived in the open, supplied only with such provision as he carried in his scrip. He had to defend his charges against thieves and wild beasts with staff or sling as his weapon. His shepherd's flute might be the sole companion of his watch, the music of his pipings his only cheer. Ever alert, he must bring back the sheep that had strayed, tend the sick or wounded one, and carry the tired lamb in his bosom. At nightfall, gathering the flock into the fold secured by a wall of stones, he lay at the door on guard. For any injury or loss he was liable to his master; and the due increase of the flock was in his care. Jacob, serving his father-in-law Laban, recites the duties of the good shepherd and depicts his hard lot. "This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flocks have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep fled from mine eyes." The Israelites had entered the promised land as keepers of sheep. Their loyalty to Yahweh was then in its pristine freshness, intense and single, not yet debased by too familiar contact with the laxities of the alien Canaanites. The shepherd's way of life therefore, identified with the pure worship of Yahweh, was idealized in retrospect by devout writers, as an emblem of Yahweh's loving care of his people. The tender imagery woven about it transfigured its hardships. But these were very real, and they left their mark on the character of Israel.

Among a shepherd and farmer folk were no strongly marked social differences, though there might be degrees of prosperity. The nomad moving from place to place counted his sole wealth in flocks. With the settlement of a tribe or clan upon the soil, the individual began to acquire property in land; only with such possession assured to him in permanence, was he able or willing to cultivate fields and vineyards and fruit-bearing trees. The Israelite peasant usually owned his little plot of ground, which yielded a sufficient livelihood. Skill or good fortune worked here, as everywhere, to favor a few over the many; and in any group some were richer than their fellows. Such a one was the ranchman Nabal. Living in Maon, he pastured his flocks on the slopes of Carmel to the number of three thousand sheep and one thousand goats. The scale of his household is indicated in the present that his wife Abigail despatched to David to turn aside the outlaw's impatient anger (1 Sam. 25 18); as she was forced to act quickly, this generous provision must have been immediately within reach in the household stores. A man of similar resources was Ziba, chief servant of the princeling Meribaal. After David had summoned the crippled grandson of Saul to his court, he made over to Ziba's charge the property appertaining to Saul's house. Ziba had twenty servants; and he was able to bring to the king fleeing from Jerusalem a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred clusters of raisins, a hundred of summer fruit, and a skin of wine. Yet such wealthy ranchmen or landed proprietors were the exception in Israel; and whatever power their wealth placed in their hands worked no hardship upon the rest. It was not until the reign of Solomon and afterwards, when Israel turned to dwell in cities and increase of trade brought a new form of riches, that the distinctions of class and privilege began to bear heavily upon the people. The evils of social injustice, which in later

generations the prophets denounced bitterly, were unknown in the period of the Judges and the early kingdom. Throughout the mass, the lot of the Israelites was a pleasant one, not yet overburdened by the oppressions of foreign conquerors or excessive inequalities at home. Obscure and inglorious, unredeemed by any forms of art expression other than story-telling, song, and dancing, yet their ways were not wholly untouched by imaginative values.

Labor in the fields and the lonely watches in wilder regions were only a part of Israel's life. Once released from the routine of necessity, the soul of the people found utterance in their festivals and ritual observances. These were occasions of meeting and rejoicing for all the group in common or at the least for whole families together. Imagination and emotion, swaying all in a single collective enthusiasm, set free the spirit and rendered it susceptible to any powerful stimulus. Here was plastic material which leaders of the people might shape to their own purposes. That these leaders proved to be the prophets is significant of Israel's predispositions. It was many years in the future that the great prophets came forward to bring the latent genius of the people into effect. But during the period up to the time of Solomon, Israel revealed something of its character in the ideas which prompted its religious rites and animated its popular festivals.

As the Israelites conceived the world, all human concerns were linked immediately with the divine. Man stood in direct communion with the deity, — a relation maintained or renewed by sacrifice. The approach to God by means of sacrifice implied a gift, for propitiation or in thankfulness, offered upon the altar, usually a gift of food; the rite ended in a feast, shared in common by the god and his worshippers. In this act was certified the deity's acceptance of the offering, whereby his favor was vouchsafed and assured; and therefore

the solemnity of sacrifice issued in merriment and relaxation. The hardships of customary toil gave place to rejoicing. Whatever lightheartedness and imaginative fervor lay in Israel's nature was lavished upon the ceremonies of drawing near to God.

The occasions of sacrifice were many and various. Even the slaughter of an animal was a sacrificial act; a birth, the weaning of a child, a marriage, departure on a journey, the reception of a guest, were thus celebrated. The act of offering was not exclusively a function of the priest, as in later Israel, but might be performed by the head of a family or the chief of a clan. In the accompanying feast the whole family with its dependents and guests, or all the clan, participated. It was in such circumstances that the youth Saul first met with Samuel the seer. The people that day had a sacrifice in the high place; and the man of God was come into the city to go up with them to bless the sacrifice, thus adding to the happy occasion the prestige of his exceptional powers. The number of those bidden to the feast was about thirty persons, typical perhaps of these festal gatherings within the village community. The rule of the feast was most liberal hospitality and indulgence to the limit of abundance. The sociability of religious observance lent a joyousness to common life which otherwise the resources of Israel might hardly have made possible. The spontaneous exuberant emotion which among other nations sought expression in creating forms of beauty here found vent in worship.

Although sacrifice might be offered at any time to signalize some special event, certain festivals were kept by all Israel at fixed seasons. By far the oldest among them was the feast of the New Moon, observed immemorially when the tribes were still wanderers in the desert. It was essentially a family feast. Saul celebrated the day in the intimacy of his table-companionship, when the absence of David

was especially remarked; and David's excuse was his pretended desire to join the home circle in Bethlehem. "Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there." As all the members of each family or small clan month by month joined in the festival from generation to generation, the long continuity of family life received constant emphasis; and the sense thus ever renewed of the closeness of the ties that held the members together, intensified their native pride of race. The feast of the New Moon, though not recognized in the later official religion of Israel, persisted among the people as one of their most cherished observances. Linked probably with the phases of the moon was the Sabbath or weekly day of rest. At this period the holiday had a different significance from that imposed upon it by the rigors of the priestly code of Judaism. The early legislation is concerned with it in its humane aspects, having little regard for the punctilious detail of ceremonial law. Men must abstain from labor, but in order that they might rest; and the Sabbath, not yet a day of scrupulous prohibitions, was an occasion of refreshment and ease. It suited the lax temper of a people in the first flush of material abundance to hold festival in the spirit of joyful abandon.

The succession of feasts which accented life as the days went by culminated in the three great annual festivals associated with the harvest. Like the Canaanites in whose midst they dwelt, the newcomers upon the soil believed the yield of the earth and the increase of the flocks to be the direct gift of the deity. In a literal and wholly practical sense, the god was the owner, the *Baal* of the land; and upon his mood, whether favorable or adverse, depended the returns from the labor of men. With the Israelites, this god was Yahweh. Among the Canaanites, the baal was variously named. It was not until a later age that the prophets sharpened the distinction between Yah-

weh and the baals. Israel said: "I will go after my lovers [the gods of the land] that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." But Yahweh, by the mouth of his prophet, declares: "She [Israel] did not know that *I* gave her the grain, and the new wine, and the oil, and multiplied unto her silver and gold." During the early centuries, therefore, the attitude of peasant Israel toward its God was the same as that of the Canaanites; and in its religious procedure identified with life on the soil, Israel adopted the ancient customs of its neighbors. At their stage of culture, religion was practical rather than ethical in its consequences; moral values, so far as they were apprehended at all, were still quite secondary to material benefits. Accordingly the goodness of God, in their simple conception of it, was manifest as bounty; and among a farmer folk, divine bounty was bestowed supremely in the harvest.

To hallow and to celebrate the progress of the harvest, the people held three great festivals. The Feast of Unleavened Bread marked the first promise of the yield to come, when the grain began to form into the ear. On the eve of this feast, which was known to the Israelites only after their settlement on the land, was observed the ancestral Passover, the sacrifice of the firstlings of the flock. The Passover, different in origin, for it reached far back into the past of shepherds in the desert, was linked in practice with the agricultural festival of Unleavened Bread, rooted in the soil of Canaan; as both were observed in spring-time, at the same period and with similar motives, they became readily conjoined as a single occasion. Seven weeks later followed First Fruits, called the Feast of Harvest, to celebrate the ripened grain and the joys of reaping. Finally the swelling harvest rose to flood in the vintage, and so the festal year attained its climax in the jubilation of the Ingathering. It was named

the Feast of Booths; for as the people went out into the fields at the time of vintage and there camped under rude huts of boughs, so the festival itself was held at the sanctuary in like conditions. Ingathering was the chief feast of all. As grain, wine, and oil were offered in sacrifice, it summed up the yield of the whole year's harvest; and the produce of the earth garnered and secured at last to man's enjoyment, it crowned the season's toil. It marked also the "turn of the year," the end of the old year and the beginning of the new.

The three great harvest festivals were observed by a general pilgrimage to a common sanctuary. In gala dress, decked with their nose-rings and their jewels, the people thronged to the high place. Each family brought to the altar its own gift of grain and wine, moreover flesh for the sacrifice and its attendant feast. The offering was due to God as tribute to the lord of the land; it was presented also in thanksgiving to the bestower of fertility. Such was the spirit of the offering, but the substance of it served no less for the delectation of the givers. A later law provided that if the worshippers were not able to bring their gifts with them because the distance was too great, they might purchase at the sanctuary everything needful; and the law recognized explicitly the festive character of the occasion. "Thou shalt bestow the money for whatsoever thy soul desireth, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul asketh of thee: and thou shalt eat there before Yahweh thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household."

A glimpse of the vintage feast, as the Canaanites observed it, is caught in the story of Abimelech. "They went out into the field, and gathered their vineyards, and trod the grapes, and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink." The manner of celebration was not different with the Israelites. It was to such a festival that Elkanah went up year by year with his two

wives and his sons and daughters. Presiding over the feast, as head of the family, he gave to all the members their due portion; but to his wife Hannah, who was barren, he gave a double portion, because he loved her. After they had eaten and drunk, Hannah rose up to pray before Yahweh. Her lips moved, but she spoke no word aloud. The old priest, remarking her, supposed her to be overcome with wine, and he rebuked her, saying, "How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee." The fact that the priest assumed straightway that the woman must be drunk rather than that she might be at prayer, illuminates the usual character of the festal merry-making. The success of the feast was measured by its abundance, with the corresponding incentive to hilarity. But food and drink were not the only entertainment. It is narrated that at the yearly feast, the daughters of Shiloh came out to dance in the dances, — swaying in rhythmic procession, whirling, or tripping a wide circle, singing in antiphonal refrain, and ecstatically beating timbrels, castanets and cymbals, to the great delight and excitation of the onlookers. Doubtless the sacred prostitutes attached to the ancient sanctuaries of Canaan played a part in the general revelry. The jubilation of Israel's festivals is recalled by the prophet Isaiah: "Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come unto the mountain of Yahweh." And their prevailing joyousness is implied in the threatening words of Yahweh, uttered by Hosea, "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies."

Sacrificial feasts of the family and clan, and still more the great popular festivals throughout the land, were the supreme opportunities of social intercourse. The people were gathered together in their gayest humor. As the worshippers might buy at the sanctuary

itself what they needed for their offering and the feast, the occasion was also a kind of great fair or market, enlivened by the spirit of holiday. It may be fancied that the bleating of sheep, the lowing of oxen, and the cries of the vendors urged on the noisy bustle of the throng. In the festivities accompanying the sacrifice, food abounded, wine flowed copiously; the guests mingled freely, stimulated to good-fellowship by the cheer, and animated by a common purpose. The crowd-impulse held sway completely. The revelry was quickened further by story-telling, poetry, song, and the music of instruments. Ingenious riddles — such as the hero Samson loved — passing back and forth, and sharpening the wits, were vastly prized. In the daily home life of Israel, tales and poems were recited, when the people gathered at evening in the town gate, by the well outside the village, or about the shepherd's camp-fire. But among the throngs at the sanctuary, the skill of the narrators and the zest of the listeners rose to their highest pitch. The traditions and legends of their past, at first merely local in their origin or application, became the treasured common property of all the people; told and retold year by year with mounting pride to the response of immense popular enthusiasm, they moved toward the form that was finally impressed upon them by writing, when the nation at length achieved a literature. Whatever the Israelites had of imagination or of impulse to art expression in narrative, dancing, and music here came to its fullest utterance.

The influence of these festivals, therefore, upon the cultural development of Israel was very great. The contacts with one another in common worship and joyousness released the constraints of dull labor and roused the sensibilities to playful freedom of expression; and the occasion offered both incentive and opportunity. Assembled from over the land with a single general purpose, the people renewed the consciousness of old tribal bonds which tended to become

dissolved into the ties of place; and reaffirming thus their unity as the people of Yahweh amidst the alien Canaanites, they safeguarded their distinctive national character. The popular festivals continued far down into history, even after worship was compressed into a more formal and sacerdotal mould. It is significant of the genius of the Israelites, as it later manifested itself, that the chief diversions which they enjoyed were associated with occasions of a religious import. During this early period, Israel's conception of the divine did not differ fundamentally from that of other peoples at the same stage of culture. What distinguished this nation, however, from all its contemporaries was its rapid rise to ethical ideas. The unfoldment was effected under the guidance of the prophets. The temper of the people on which they wrought with sublime results revealed itself in its most plastic state in their festivals.

The three harvest celebrations year by year were observed among the farmer folk settled for the most part in the wide regions west and north of Jerusalem. A festival of a local and more private kind was the Feast of Sheep-shearing. It was kept chiefly in Judea, home of the shepherds. In the spring, at the season of cutting wool, the owner of the flock, quitting his house in the village or town, journeyed to the open country where his sheep were pastured, there to oversee the labors of the shearing. The work finished, a firstling of the flock and the choicest of the wool were offered to Yahweh in thankful recognition of his favor. Then followed feasting and carouse, doubtless with story-telling and rude jest; it may be imagined that tales of the pranks and stratagems of the wily shepherd Jacob were relished expertly by fellows of his craft. A typical instance of the shearing festival is the story of Nabal. The narrative recounts that the wealthy ranchman held feast like the feast of a king, and his heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. Ten days later he died, whether from ex-

cess of indulgence or the shock of his wife's free-handed dealings with David is not told. Likewise Absalom took advantage of the feast of sheep-shearing to revenge himself on his brother Amnon, when in the exuberance of the celebration Amnon's heart was merry with wine and he was off his guard. It is only a glimpse here and there, revealed in passing within in the old narratives, but it discloses with genial unconscious directness the rougher side of Israel at work and play.

Although the Israelites were a simple people, close to the earth, crude in their material civilization, and lacking traditions of their own of artistic culture, their personal intercourse was touched with distinction by their dignity of bearing and an elaborate courtesy of address. Countless examples give body and picturesqueness to the figures that move through the narratives: as Abraham's reception of the messengers of Yahweh, Moses' welcome to his father-in-law Jethro, and notably Abigail's approach to David. "And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off her ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground. And she fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me be the iniquity; and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine ears, and hear thou the words of thine handmaid." Not only between the great and the lowly but among equals, the large flowing gesture of deference came to voice in protestations of obsequious compliment, and the whole attitude was suffused with the emotionalism of their quick responsive nature. Between intimates, kisses and embraces were a customary salutation. Easily stirred, they made no attempt to restrain a flood of weeping and loud cries. After this fashion Jacob drew near to his brother Esau. "And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming. . . . And Jacob bowed him-

self to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." When David was rejoined by Jonathan in the field, "David arose and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David exceeded." An inborn simple nobility was overwrought into arabesques of outward flourishes, in which craftiness was lighted with imagination, and a passionate temperament sought to find expression for a struggling love of form. Perhaps something of the proud self-consciousness of the nomad survived in the bearing of the Israelites, but their words and gestures of address recall in their ostentatious humility the formulas of the Amarna letters. Such manners were characteristic of other oriental peoples of their own time; and the Israelites might quite readily have taken on the floridly figured mode of their new environment. However rudimentary their conditions, they were not wanting in the little amenities that grace daily intercourse.

Whatever of material culture the tribes achieved up to the time of the monarchy was learned from the Canaanites. Though the Israelites finally made themselves masters of the country and impressed their character upon it by force of certain qualities of spirit, yet in the practical arts they remained subordinate to the peoples whom they displaced or gradually absorbed. The civilization into which they entered was complex, mature and opulent. The invaders, bred to the raising of flocks in the desert, brought no technical skill of their own; and when settled on the land, they invented nothing. Present-day research in the soil of Canaan discloses no break of continuity in the transition from the ancient culture to the products of the Israelite occupation. So far as there is a difference, it shows a loss of excellence, the mere reproduction of older models, but with

inferior workmanship. Adaptation on the part of Israel was simplified by the fact that the Canaanites, though modified by centuries of powerful and diverse foreign influences, were of the same race and cognate speech with the Hebrews. After the settlement, the two peoples lived a life in common, and they moved in the same circle of ideas. The Israelites at length won a national entity, but they owed their progress in cultural attainment during the early period to the civilization already wrought out by their kindred but cleverer predecessors in Canaan. The promise of Yahweh to Israel accorded with actual fact: "To give thee great and goodly cities which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and cisterns hewn out, which thou hewedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not." Israel reaped where it had not sown.

The resources of the land were varied and sufficient, if the present that Barzillai the Gileadite brought to the fugitive king David may be taken as representative: — "beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine." As the Israelites, to gain their livelihood, were not crushed by toil, there was freedom to work in the spirit of art, had they felt the impulse toward beautiful forms, or possessed the skill to fashion them. Lacking both impulse and skill, the villagers developed, excepting perhaps the potter, no guilds of trained workers in the several crafts. These came into being only after large numbers of the people had begun to live in cities. A passage interpolated in the first book of Samuel, though the text is corrupt and the meaning obscure, offers nevertheless the suggestive comment: "There was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; . . . but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man

his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock . . . So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan." The use of bronze was known in Canaan as early as 2000 B.C.; iron was introduced by the Philistines about a millennium later: but Israel was slow to master either metal, and remained content with the primitive convenience of flint. Throughout the countryside the peasant was his own artisan. The wants of the people were simple and easily met. The materials of clothing, of household utensils and farming tools, were of their own producing or close at hand; field stone and clay sufficed for their rude dwellings. Of architecture in the sense of noble form and subsidiary adornment they had no vision as they had no need. Neighbors to great nations famed for magnificent building, they rested satisfied with mere shelter or defence. Solomon was the first in Israel to point the way to architectural enterprise; and he was obliged to summon the aid of foreign designers and workmen, admitting quite unabashed that "there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians."

Some compensation for its lack of invention and ability in the making of beautiful things, Israel found in music and dancing and in devising the stuff which finally constitutes literature. From the beginning music seems to have played an important and intimate part in the people's life. Frequent references to it occur in the oldest narratives, which are contemporary with events; later writers assumed as a matter of course that it was practised by the patriarchs; and the earliest historian quite naturally assigns a place among the primal forefathers of mankind to Jubal, "father of all such as handle the harp and pipe." Every occasion of ceremony, of rejoicing and grief, had its appropriate accompaniment of music. When David set

forth to bring the Ark up to Jerusalem, all the house of Israel played before Yahweh with all manner of instruments; and they brought up the Ark with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. At King David's court, to enhance the pleasures of the table, was maintained a company of singing men and women. Laban's reproach to Jacob is mingled with regret: "Wherefore didst thou flee secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp?" The instruments known to the Israelites were the harp, small enough to be carried easily, and the lyre, the pipe, the horn for signals or alarm, the tabret or small drum, the timbrel or tambourine, cymbals, and castanets. It may be inferred that their music consisted chiefly in loudness and volume, almost exclusively with emphasis upon the rhythm; whatever melody it may have had was of the simplest, and harmony was unknown. Of such qualities, it was preëminently exciting in its effects. With the Israelites, music was not only an emotional stimulus; it had also, in their conception of it, a magical influence, the power to exorcise evil spirits and to keep away demons. David, playing upon his harp, soothes the melancholy of Saul by charming forth the spirit that possesses him; wailing and piping for the dead was less an expression of personal grief, for usually professional mourners were employed, than an attempt to drive off the demons that might seek to enter the body. The music of instruments was seldom used alone for its own sake, but rather it served as the accompaniment of song and dancing. A single minstrel might croon his ballad to the strumming of his lyre. In chorus, the songs were chanted in unison, or else antiphonally, with one voice carrying the burden, and the chorus responding in refrain. So Miriam intoned:

Sing ye to Yahweh, for he hath triumphed gloriously!

and the maidens, moving with rhythmic step to the beat of tambourines, answered:

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea!

Out of such simple elements developed the intricate majesty and surging eloquence of the Psalms.

Giving plastic embodiment to music and song, the dance was processional in movement, sometimes graceful, often orgiastic. Its character may be divined from the Hebrew terms referring to it, which signify leaping, circling, and making merry. The quick temper of the people sprang to expression in violent or ecstatic gesture, which submitted readily to organizing rhythms. Any popular celebration, a victory in war, the return of a hero, the observance of a festival, a general rejoicing, furnished the moment for a tripping file of maidens, striking their gaily trimmed tambourines, to thread the measures of their dance, while the enthusiasm kindled by the figured steps and the loud beat of timbrels swept the spectators into the response of noisy acclaim. The Israelites of this early period were a light-hearted people, impetuous, loving pleasure, themselves an instrument easy to be played upon.

Out of the forms of rhythmic expression — measured words accompanied by music and the varied gestures of the dance — rose the beginnings of Israelite literature. With increase of skill in the manipulation of words, song gave way to recitation; and at length narrative overflowed into the wider, less constraining reaches of prose. During the period of the settlement, there was current in Israel a considerable amount of the material of literature. But these poems, brief tales, and popular legends, carried by professional reciters or on the lips of the people, passed only as oral tradition. The art of writing, practised in Canaan as early as the fifteenth century, was not employed to any extent by the Israelites probably until the reign of

David, four hundred years later. At this time it happened that the more stable conditions of life under the monarchy favored an interest in literature for its own sake; moreover, the consciousness of national unity so recently won, and pride of achievement, lent a new value to the old tribal traditions. Accordingly, some of the learned in Israel were prompted to gather the song and stories of the people, and to commit them to written form.

Of the earliest literature of Israel, the Hebrew scriptures have preserved but a meagre part. Only a few old songs and poems survive in cursory citation. The popular legends and tales wrought into the great narratives are mere fragments drawn from the large store accumulated by living tradition. In written form, their deftness and finish are such as to indicate a long period of growth and currency. The art of story-telling was widely cultivated in ancient Israel with amazing skill; and the oral tales woven into the fibre of the written narratives stand out in glowing patterns of exquisite workmanship. The earlier writers who preserved them were sympathetic with their freshness and charm. The sombre zeal of priests, into whose hands they finally passed, could not dim their lustre.

In its beginnings this literature was essentially a folk-literature, sprung from the familiar experience and big common emotions of all the people. The first budding of their genius, it was also an earnest of their quality. It reveals the Israelites, otherwise without distinction in worldly achievement, as gifted poetically in the highest degree. What they lacked in material culture was abundantly offset by the wealth of their imaginative life. Not in practical affairs but in its literature may be traced the means by which Israel won its enduring gains for the spirit of man.

Yet the few centuries in which the scriptures of Israel came into being were crowded with catastrophic events.

XI

DIVIDED ISRAEL

Solomon, son of David the Judahite, was succeeded by his son Rehoboam. The tribe of Judah, coming late and reckoned the youngest of Jacob's sons, had risen swiftly to supremacy in the nation. Not wholly by accident had the burdens of Solomon's prodigal reign fallen most heavily upon the northern tribes. Their discontent stirred ominously in the revolt of the Ephraimite Jeroboam, king's overseer of forced labor. But the despot was too firmly placed. And Jeroboam fled into Egypt.

Already the kingship in Israel was become hereditary. In view of the disaffection of the northern tribes, however, it was a politic act on the part of the new king Rehoboam to repair to their ancient city of Shechem, long hallowed in Ephraimite tradition, to receive their sanction. The tribes seized the occasion to present their grievances. The king's answer was harsh and provoking. "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Whereupon the old desert spirit of tribal independence cried again in furious outburst:

> What portion have we in David?
> Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.
> To your tents, O Israel!
> Now see to thine own house, David!

Contemptuously the king sent his overseer of the labor-gangs, not a popular or conciliatory personage, to intimidate the insurgents. But they stoned him to death. And Rehoboam, mounting his chariot,

drove with all haste to Jerusalem. The former rebel leader, Jeroboam, who had now returned from Egypt, was made king over the northern tribes or "Israel." There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only. Henceforth Israel and Judah went their divided ways, two kingdoms.

The separation befell about the year 935 B.C. Until the overthrow of its capital, Samaria, and the dispersion of the ten tribes in 722, the chief interest of Hebrew story lies with the northern kingdom. Its situation was more favored by nature than was the south for the development of a luxurious material civilization. Its plains yielded a more varied and abundant harvest than the hills of Judah; likewise they were more exposed to the attack of hostile nations, but also more open to the influences of foreign culture. This contact with other peoples, resulting in frequent wars, in wider trade relations, and the reception of ideas, lent speed and complexity to the unfolding of Israel's genius.

Contrasting with the fortunes of Judah, whose throne passed in the keeping of the house of David at Jerusalem in unbroken succession until the exile in 586, the brief two centuries of Israel's crowded history witnessed frequent changes of dynasty, attended by assassination and sweeping massacre. Jeroboam, a really strong man, maintained himself as king for twenty-two years. But his son and successor, Nadab, after a reign of two years, was murdered by Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar, who seizing the kingly power, exterminated all the house of Jeroboam. In his turn, Baasha reigned twenty-four years, and was succeeded by his son Elah. After two years Elah's captain of the chariots, Zimri, conspired against him; and when the king was drinking himself drunk in the house of his master of the palace, Zimri slew Elah, made himself king, and exterminated the house of Baasha. But violence again, in his turn,

brought his swift end. The army, in the field against the Philistines, proclaimed their captain Omri king. With his forces Omri laid siege to the capital; and when Zimri saw that his city was taken, he burned the king's house over himself and perished with it, having reigned seven days. The triumph of Omri, however, was not complete, for half the people followed Tibni to make him king; but finally the party of Omri prevailed. Omri ruled twelve years; and three kings of his house succeeded him. His son Ahab held the throne twenty-two years, and was followed by his son Ahaziah, who after a reign of two years was succeeded by his brother Joram. Twelve years Joram reigned, and was then murdered by his army commander Jehu, who bloodily made himself king and proceeded to destroy all the family of Ahab. Jehu ruled for twenty-eight years. The dynasty that he founded was continued by four generations after him: Jehoahaz, seventeen years; Joash, sixteen years; Jeroboam II, forty-one years; and finally Zechariah, who after six months on the throne was assassinated by Shallum. One month only Shallum maintained himself, and in turn was murdered by Menahem, who reigned ten years and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah. After two years he was slain by his captain Pekah, who ruled ten years, and then was murdered by Hoshea. Eight years later, in 722, Samaria fell to the conquering Assyrians. The kingdom of Israel had run its course, and ceased.

In two centuries Israel had been ruled by nine different dynasties, numbering nineteen kings. Always threatened, often beset and worsted by external foes, Israel nevertheless failed to placate its brother Judah, the weaker power but the rightful heir to David's kingdom. The break between north and south was followed by war, which continued intermittently for two generations. When this turned in Israel's favor, Judah sought alliance with Damascus, a

manœuvre which accrued finally to the disadvantage of both Hebrew states. A truce between them was effected by the marriage of Ahab's daughter with Jehoram, king of Judah; and the two kingdoms together joined forces with the Arameans to fight against Assyria (849–845). In the reign of Joash, fifth king after Ahab, Israel was again at war with Judah. Taking captive King Amaziah in the battle at Beth-shemesh, Joash entered Jerusalem, broke down the northern wall, and carried off hostages and the treasures of the palace and the Temple. Half a century later, Judah, to defend itself against a combined attack of Israel and Damascus, purchased the support of Assyria. In little more than a decade afterwards, the northern kingdom succumbed to the crushing march of the Assyrian empire. It had been better policy throughout for Israel to stand with Judah against all foreign enemies. For although in the long succession of fratricidal wars, Israel proved itself the stronger of the two Hebrew states, yet division and this constant strife worked to its final overthrow.

To the convulsive welter of domestic violence and ruinous civil strife were added the devastations of foreign wars. Early in the reign of the first Jeroboam, Egypt once again reached out to plunder Canaan. In the south Judah suffered the more severely; but even Jeroboam quit his capital at Shechem and fortified Penuel across the Jordan. Yet a greater danger, ever increasing, threatened from the north. The Aramean kingdom of Damascus, ambitious for expansion and trade, was pressing toward the sea; and Israel lay across its path. Already David, king over a united nation, had met the initial shock triumphantly. But Omri, though strong enough to conquer Moab, was obliged to yield some of his cities to the Arameans, granting them also certain rights of trade in his capital, Samaria. From further eastward, the crescent might of Assyria, striding forth from the ruins of the Babylonian empire, was thrusting toward the

coastland, and now had so far made its way as to compel Omri to render tribute. His son Ahab, reënforced by alliances with the Phœnicians and with Judah, beat back new invasions of the Arameans, regained the cities which his father had ceded, and won for Israel trading rights in Damascus. Soon afterwards Ahab, commanding an army which numbered, according to the annals of the Assyrian king, two thousand chariots and ten thousand foot-soldiers, joined with Aramean princes against Assyria. In 854, the earliest date in Israelite chronology to be fixed by reference to external sources, a battle was fought at Karkar on the Orontes; even though the Assyrians may have drawn an uncertain victory, they relaxed their pressure on the westland. So swiftly flashed the shuttle of conflicting interest through the web of tangled policy and selfish momentary advantage that in the following year Ahab was again at war with the Arameans. Israel won; but Ahab, valorous in the thick of battle, paid for his courage with his life.

Twice again, in 849 and 845, Israel united with the Arameans to drive back Assyria. But these alliances availed nothing to end the perennial border warfare between the rival capitals of Samaria and Damascus. At length Assyria, profiting by the disruption and internecine strife that weakened both of the kingdoms opposed to it, succeeded in overrunning the west, and laid King Jehu under tribute. Also in Jehu's reign, again the Arameans smote Israel, this time in all its borders from the Jordan eastwards. Its cities were sacked, the men massacred, the women outraged, and the children carried off to slavery. Under Jehu's son Jehoahaz, the nation suffered continually at the hand of the Aramean conquerors: their king made the Israelites like dust in the threshing. With Joash, son of Jehoahaz, came a turn of fortune. In three campaigns he recovered the cities his father had lost to the Arameans; and his son Jeroboam II restored all the

border of Israel. The long reign of Jeroboam was the climax of Israel's material greatness. Upon his death in 743, the nation plunged to its violent end.

During the reign of Menahem, the third king in less than a year to rule after Jeroboam II, the westward march of Assyria struck again at Israel's constant insecurity. By a present of one thousand talents, exacted from sixty thousand of his wealthy subjects, Menahem induced the enemy to withdraw. But only for a time. In the days of Pekah, who had slain the son of Menahem, "came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maacah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria." At this same period, in the year 732, the Assyrians conquered Damascus, slew its king, and deported the inhabitants. The Aramean danger threatened Israel no longer. But in its place loomed the vastly more formidable menace of Assyria, which was speedily to overwhelm the enfeebled Israelite kingdom.

Broken by disaster at the hand of the foreign aggressor, Pekah fell a victim to rebellion at home. The assassin Hoshea succeeded to the throne.

Against him came up Shalmanezer king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and brought him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and offered no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria [Sargon II] took Samaria, and carried Israel away unto Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

According to an inscription of Sargon, the inhabitants of Samaria to the number of 27,290 were deported, among them certainly most of the official and the wealthy classes and all the leading personages. Doubtless Israelite peasants remained on the land. But the Assyrians colonized the conquered territory with peoples gathered from other regions of the great empire. Samaria was an Assyrian province. Its inhabitants became a mixed people; wherefore in later centuries the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans. The kingdom of Israel was no more. The future passed to Judah.

Amidst the alarms of incessant devastating wars and the turmoils of thick-coming bloody revolutions that made Israel's history as a state, social conditions also were undergoing profound changes of form and spirit.

The institution of the monarchy entailed a new organization of society, with far-reaching effects. The old tribal bonds of kinship had been resolved into community of interest based upon locality. With this different alignment came another system of administration. More and more as the functions of the tribal elders were taken over by the king and his appointees, the earlier methods of representative control yielded to government by the few. Individuals and families rose to positions of influence, owing their power to wealth or official station; and social disparities multiplied rapidly throughout the nation.

These changes were not due to the king alone. For his authority, as confronting the strongly individualistic character of his people, was by no means absolute. In theory he was the chosen and anointed of Yahweh. But frequent revolutions, attended by the violent overthrow of the royal person, must have shaken what simple faith the people had in the divinity which should hedge a king. Certain

functions were accorded the king as by right. Naturally the sovereign was chief priest and supreme judge; likewise he was commander of the army. In the ordinary course of state business the king decreed the taxes, and to meet extraordinary needs, he might levy special assessments; he was able also to compel the forced labor of his subjects. A comment on the kingship, as it impressed the people, is ascribed to the foresight of Samuel, though in fact it was wrung from bitter experience.

This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots: and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his eunuchs, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest cattle, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants.

Manifestly the king's rule might be, and doubtless often was, oppressive. The actual rights and duties of the sovereign, however, were not fixed rigidly, but depended, so far as concerned their exercise or abuse, upon the personal character of individual monarchs. Sometimes the king deferred to the opinion of his advisers and held himself responsive to the desires of his subjects. Ravening and unbridled rulers there were in Israel, but in general, the people enjoyed a measure of private freedom unknown to contemporary despotisms.

Since the king was obliged in practice to delegate his powers, there followed a great increase in the number and the functions of royal appointees, with consequent changes in social organization. The tribal system, though it vested the rule of the clan in the elders, was in spirit democratic, because representative; it was a rulership of the group by the group in its own interest. Under the monarchy, when government, centralized at the capital, proceeded from above downward throughout the nation, the officials of the court and their friends drew together into an aristocracy set off from the people. Honors and emoluments tended to become restricted to certain families; and an individual, like Gideon or Saul or David, whose talents might enable him to gain position, unless he were an army officer supported by his troops, had little chance to rise out of obscurity. With the ruling caste of princes, nobles, priests, and army commanders, were associated the families of the rich, allied with the aristocracy by virtue of the privileges conferred upon them by their wealth. So the tribal and local divisions of an earlier time, which allowed equality within the group, gave place to distinctions of class and property. Formerly the division had been vertical, separating one community from another. Now the lines of cleavage were horizontal: at the bottom, the mass; thence by degrees of wealth and station, to officials, courtiers, and the king. The consequences of these distinctions were the occasion and the object of the impassioned teaching of the prophets. In their plea for social justice and personal righteousness, the issues of morality unfolded into the highest reaches of religion.

The needs of the fast expanding kingdom of David had led the monarch to surround himself with functionaries undreamed of by the simple chieftain Saul. To the offices that David created, the grandiose Solomon added new posts and dignities. Over the entire nation,

divided now into administrative departments, were set the "princes of the provinces," who represented the king rather than the people. The tribal elders were succeeded by the elders of the city, whose authority, instead of receiving sanction from their fellows, reverted to royal favor. As the supreme judicial power was now vested in the king, and a case might be brought to him for last appeal, the local judges, to whom the people formerly resorted, lost their influence. Likewise for war, the leaders of the group under the tribal organization gave place to the king's officers. Though all Israelites were liable for service in time of need, the nucleus of the military forces was a standing army, in part recruited from foreigners, devoted to the person of the monarch; and the army commanders, as a professional class, were ranged on the side of the aristocracy. Identified with the nobles also were the court priests, who performed their duties as servants of the crown. In this respect they constituted an order distinct from the priests of the popular religion ministering at the ancient sanctuaries, friends of all the countryside. Subservient to the interests of the king, as royal officials, they lost the intimate contact of fellowship with the group in small communities. The class distinctions that centred in the capital prevailed in other cities. In Jezreel were "he that was over the household, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and they that brought up the king's children." Thus the extension and the transfer of the royal prerogatives gave rise to an aristocracy, which proved itself not only corrupt but also hostile to the welfare of the people. The governing classes, associated with the court and established in the cities, drew apart from the mass of Israelites settled upon the land.

Life on the soil was the foundation of Israelite society. Some land was held in common by the group as a whole. But also the individ-

ual peasant might own his little plot of ground. Inheritance passed from father to son. If the owner was obliged to sell, the next of kin came forward to redeem it, that the patrimony might not fall into the hands of strangers. To the original possesser was still reserved the right to buy back his land. So basic was the title to individual possession that once the owner of a vineyard dared to refuse a king who coveted his ground; and the monarch was obliged to resort to stratagem and murder to compass his end. In practice, however, this fundamental right was often violated by the rich and powerful. Thus the prophet Micah charged: "They covet fields, and seize them, and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." Israel had no system of tenancy of land on payment of rent, which might make possible the exploitation of the poor by extortionate rentals. The means by which the rich exercised the power that their wealth gave into their hand was outright expropriation, taking advantage of the poor man's necessities to deprive him of his inheritance. The impoverished and dispossessed became hirelings or slaves.

The owner of land worked his property by his own efforts, with the help of his family and of his slaves. The class of paid workers, or landless freemen who labored for wages, seems not to have been numerous. Their standing, however, was recognized and safeguarded by the law. In Deuteronomy it is ordained: "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy stranger-sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates: in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it." The most notable instance of the hireling is Jacob, who served Laban twenty years for "wages." Other examples are few.

The place of paid workers was filled in Israel by slaves.[1] Their lot, as compared with that of the poor freeman, was not hard; nor according to Israelite standards, was it necessarily degraded. They were members of the household, and they shared in the family worship and festivals. The maidservant usually was the concubine of her owner; or she might marry his son, being granted therewith full rights as a wife. In the work of farm and dwelling, in which everyone had a part, the master and his slaves met on terms of friendliness. Often they enjoyed his confidence, and were entrusted with important tasks. Such were Eliezer, servant of Abraham, Saul's servant and companion when he set forth to find his father's asses, and Ziba, servant of Meribaal. Perhaps the larger number of slaves were foreigners, captives in war or purchased from abroad. But the free Israelite also might be reduced to slavery. A father had the right to sell his sons and daughters, a man himself might be sold for debt, if unable otherwise to redeem his pledge. Thus were the needy sold even for a pair of shoes (Am. 8 6). The current price of a slave was thirty shekels. So numerous were slaves in Israel, so much were they an integral and important element of society, that the written law was greatly concerned with their welfare, amply assuring the protection of their persons and their rights. Their lot was so far from evil or intolerable, that the law which provided for their release at the end of six years assumed that they might prefer to remain with their masters gladly of their own choice. The social injustices which the prophets denounced were real and bitter, but they were due to individual unrighteousness. The conditions of labor as such permitted a liberal life.

Though Israel remained primarily a peasant folk, the develop-

[1] The Hebrew words for "slave" are translated in the English versions as "servant."

ment of trade, which received its first powerful impetus under the luxury-loving Solomon, drew increasing numbers to the cities. Their growth changed the character of Israelite society. Differences were sharpened. The old simplicity, the old sense of things in common, broke into divergent purposes. Homely content was ravaged by greed. Not well-being was the aim of life, but riches; and the hand of every man was against his brother. With trade came foreigners to reside, bringing with them their own customs, morals, and modes of worship; and their example impaired Israel's traditional singleness and devotion. What the nation gained in new interests and wider horizons was paid with a loss of integrity. The task of the prophets was rendered the more necessary and the harder.

To the cities gradually drifted the artisans. In the old days, the peasant contrived for himself or obtained from a neighbor workman such simple equipment as he needed. Finding in the city a larger market for a single kind of product, the artisans gave themselves over to specialized crafts. Workers in the same craft united into guilds, and dwelt together in the same quarter of the city; certain towns, even, were noted as the seat of some special industry. Often a single craft was practised by one family from generation to generation. Many of the craftsmen in Israel were of old Canaanite descent or were resident Phœnicians. Of native Israelite work the quality was markedly inferior. Seemingly Israel had not the love of beautiful handiwork — for the fashioning of which, besides, the people lacked the skill. As a class the craftsmen, in common with all free Israelites, enjoyed complete personal independence. Their labor, however limited in range, was their own, subject to no external compulsions or control.

Opportunity for enrichment, other than by possession of land, lay in trade. The strip of coast tenanted by Israel formed a narrow

bridge between great empires. Since history began, caravans bearing precious metals, rare woods, spices, and fine wrought-work, filed its length north and south, touching the Tigris in the east, and in the west the long valley of the Nile. North of Israel's territory, fronting the Mediterranean, rose the cities of the Phœnicians, masters of sea-borne trade. Tyre was the mart of nations — the harvest of the Nile her revenue; her merchants were princes, her traffickers were the honorable of the earth. And Sidon was the stronghold of the sea (Is. 23 3–4, 8). In this world-commerce the Canaanites and their Hebrew successors shared as middlemen. King Solomon, advantaged by Israel's central position, knew how to exact toll of merchant caravans for passage through his land. Moreover, the native products of Canaan, oil, grain, wine, honey, balsam, myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds, might be sent forth in exchange for articles of luxury which other peoples had greater skill to fashion.

In addition to this foreign commerce, which was undertaken by the wealthier classes, mounting even to the king himself, and which centred mainly in the cities, each community had its own tradesmen, offering their wares in stalls or in the market-place of the gate. Perhaps the eloquent voice of a later prophet echoes the street-cry of the hucksters.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!

Of the manner of bargaining, its formalities and elaborate but subtly ironical courtesies, wherein the seller's pretended offer of his wares as a gift is not misunderstood by the purchaser, an episode recounted of Abraham furnishes a picturesque instance.

Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth: and

Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt, I pray thee, hear me: I will give the price of the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

It suited the temperament of the people that buying and selling, even of the simplest, should be a kind of ceremony, not lacking also in excitement. And notably the great popular festivals were the occasion of liveliest chaffering. Merchants were notorious for sharp practices; fraudulent balances, false weights, and scant measures were the rule. Much of the business remained in the hands of the Canaanites, still surviving among the Israelite population. Thus it was that the term Canaanite, applied by the prophets to their own people, signified "trader," with something of contemptuous implication (Hos. 12 7; Zeph. 1 11). Not until after the exile in Babylon and the return to the homeland were the Jews preëminently a trading people.

Settled conditions of existence, as contrasted with a life of wandering in which all members of the tribe fared and shared alike, made possible the acquisition of wealth by the individual. Its earlier form was the possession of land, which allowed the increase of cattle and crops. As the cities grew in numbers, as Israel entered into trade with other countries, there came about the accumulation of liquid

capital. From frequent references in the law and the sermons of the prophets to the practice of borrowing, it may be inferred that capital was available for loans — at high rates of interest on the security of land or personal effects. The extent of private wealth, however, can only be guessed. The resources of the nation were continually sapped by the devastations of war, by tribute wrung from the vanquished people, by famine, and by plague. Compared with the opulence of older and larger states, enriched by centuries of conquest and of commerce, the wealth of Israel was doubtless inconsiderable. But contrasted with the meagre beginnings of the tribes, Israel's present riches may well have seemed to the prophets immense. So Hosea: "And Ephraim said, Surely I am become rich, I have found me wealth." And Isaiah bears witness: "Their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures." Howbeit, the prophets speak as reformers, as champions of the needy against oppression by those whose wealth was made the instrument of injustice. Their testimony, therefore, may not be wholly free of exaggeration.

One measure of Israel's material prosperity may be found in the degree of luxury to which the nation attained. When Jeroboam made himself king of the northern tribes, he chose for his capital the ancient sanctuary city of Shechem. Later in his long reign he established his residence at Tirzah, celebrated afterwards in the Song of Songs for its beauty. Tirzah remained the royal seat of the usurper Baasha, of the drunken Elah, and of the conspirator Zimri, who in his turn was overthrown by Omri. In the seventh year of his reign, Omri built the city of Samaria. To purchase the hill on which he reared his battlements and palaces, he paid the inconsiderable sum of two talents of silver. The sightliness of his city proved his wisdom. Rising out of fat valleys, within view of the sea, command-

ing the roads northward to the plain of Jezreel, and but three days' journey from Tyre, Samaria was indeed the "crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, the flower of his glorious beauty" (Is. 28 1). By the time of Ahab, son of Omri, the kingdom had so grown in wealth and dignity that the monarch now, in addition to the capital, maintained a residence in the city of Jezreel, which came to rival Samaria as a place of royal resort. Ahab built for himself here a house of ivory; and the city was the scene of many terrible events. Samaria, however, until it fell to the Assyrians in 722, remained the capital of the northern kingdom. Through the countryside sufficiently were to be had the necessaries of life, and on the great estates abundantly. It was rather in the chief cities that wealth was converted into luxury. In the capital were the palaces of the king and his court, and the massive hewn-stone houses of the rich. Here centred all the splendors and refinements of existence which the riches of Israel could command.

Witness to Israel's luxury are the prophets, — always with allowance for their reforming zeal. The king had his winter house and his summer house. There were beds of ivory, appointed with silken cushions. Especially were the banquets of the nobles the occasion of excess. The eating of meat was infrequent among the people; by immemorial custom the slaughter of an animal was a solemn act, attended with sacrifice. But heedlessly the rich ate the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the midst of the stall; the guests drank wine from bowls, and anointed themselves with the most precious oils. They rose up early in the morning that they might follow strong drink, and tarried late into the night till wine inflamed them. Their loose mirth was enhanced by idle songs to the sound of the viol; the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, were in their feasts. In these revellings the women too, sleek "kine of Bashan," played a

part; and they connived at the oppression of the poor which brought gain to their husbands, saying to their lords, Bring, and let us drink! To the vanities of life they contributed their due share. When the rebel Jehu on his mission of destruction was come to Jezreel, the aged queen-mother Jezebel, with eunuchs in the background, painted her eyes and tired her head before she looked out of her palace window to confront the intruder. What Isaiah scathingly notes of the daughters of Jerusalem was doubtless equally true of the fine ladies of Samaria. They are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet. But in the day of Yahweh's judgment, "the Lord will take away the bravery of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents; the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers; the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the rings, and the nose jewels; the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels; the handmirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils." Seemingly Israel lacked nothing of modishness or modernity.

In all this ostentatious wantonness of the capital, however, was something exotic, something alien to the racial temper of Israel. Throughout the country, the rudeness of peasant life was still touched with the savagery of tribal days. Frequent revolutions, bringing each a new monarch to the unstable throne, were attended by murder of the king and the extermination of his house. Of Menahem it is related that he slew all the inhabitants of Tiphsah and its borders, because it held out against him, and he ripped up all the women with child. In every instance the usurper was not of royal strain, but rather an adventurer from among the people, or risen to place in the army; his pretensions rested only in what violence and force he could wield. Of this ferocious temper the deeds of Jehu are a

superlative example. Noteworthy is the fact that he was incited thereto by the prophet Elisha. Moreover, that the narrative expresses no condemnation of his ruthlessness, but on the contrary approves his zeal for Yahweh's cause (2 K. 10 30), implies that the method and manner of his bloody course in no wise offended the public opinion of his time. Not until a century later the compassionate Hosea pronounced an adverse judgment.

Jehu was a captain of King Joram's army in the field against the Arameans. To him came a prophet, sent by Elisha, and secretly anointed him to be king over Israel, with the divine injunction, "Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants, the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Yahweh, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish." Thereupon Jehu, mounting his chariot, drove furiously to Jezreel, whither Joram had gone to be healed of wounds. Advised of Jehu's coming, Joram in his chariot, accompanied by Ahaziah, king of Judah, went out to meet him. When they saw that Jehu intended mischief, both kings turned and fled. Jehu drew his bow with full strength and struck Joram between his arms, so that the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. Then said Jehu to his captain, "Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite." King Ahaziah fled by way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, saying, "Smite him also in the chariot." And they smote him. But Jehu had yet to reckon with the queen-mother. When Jezebel learned of the rebel's murderous progress, she looked out at the palace window defiantly; and as Jehu entered the gate, she cried, "Is it peace, thou Zimri, thy master's murderer?"

And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. And

he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink; and he said, See now to this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.

This was but the first act of the tragedy. By the written order of Jehu, the king's sons in Samaria, to the number of seventy, were slain, and their heads put into baskets and sent to Jezreel, where Jehu commanded that they be laid in two heaps at the entrance of the gate. Then he smote all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his familiar friends, and his priests, until he left him none remaining. Jehu had yet to secure his position in the capital. Not content with the massacre of Ahab's entire following in Jezreel, on the way thence to Samaria he slew forty-two of the brothers of Ahaziah, king of Judah. Arrived at the capital, he smote all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria. But the climax of the bloody drama of Jehu's accession to the throne of Israel was still to be enacted. Guilefully the new king caused to be summoned all the prophets of Baal, all his worshippers, and all his priests. When they were assembled in the house of Baal, so that it was filled from one end to the other, Jehu loosed upon them fourscore of his guard; and they smote them with the edge of the sword. The consummate murderer's triumph was complete. For more than a quarter of a century Jehu kept his guilty throne; and he bequeathed it on his death to his sons through four generations, until there arose another assassin to seize it in his turn.

In respect of cruelty, truculence, and all evil passions, Israel differed little if at all from other nations. Yet it was this people who by virtue of some special endowment or power of insight first conceived

a God of justice and righteousness, of loving-kindness and tender mercy.

Like other nations, Israel was not innocent of the oppressions which the strong pile upon the weak. Distinctions between rich and poor began so soon as the Hebrews came into private ownership of land. In the time of the Judges, Gideon's family was the *poorest* in Manasseh. The outlaw David recruited a band of four hundred men who were in distress and debt. To point the parable rebuking David for his sin in the matter of Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan drew his metaphor from the rapacity of a rich man against a poor man (2 Sam. 12 1 f.). In the social changes that followed speedily upon the institution of the monarchy, these distinctions were defined with ever-growing sharpness as Israel widened the range of its activities.

Chief among the means whereby the strong and the rich increased their pitiless power and arrogant wealth were the prevailing corruption of justice and the extensive practice of lending money on pledge.

Israel had no formally constituted courts of law. Cases in dispute were brought to the priest at the sanctuary or to the elders in the gate. As the judges now belonged to the aristocracy, which had developed under the monarchy and was consciously opposed to the less favored masses, their decisions naturally inclined to further the interests of their own class. They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them (Is. 1 23). The right of the needy do they not judge (Jer. 5 28). Rather, they justify the wicked for a bribe. Herein was another source of corruption, for the very method of procedure enabled the judges to enrich themselves. It was customary for the litigant to bring a "present" to the judge;

and the present easily became a bribe. The princes were companions of thieves. Every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards. So in this respect, between two contestants for judicial favor, the rich man inevitably had the advantage over the poor man, the powerful and influential over the weak and the obscure. The far-reaching evils of these practices were recognized in the codes of law and in the denunciations of the prophets. "Thou shalt not wrest the justice of thy poor in his cause. And thou shalt take no gift: for a gift blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the cause of the righteous" (Ex. 23 6, 8; also Dt. 16 19). And Amos is not alone among the prophets in his rebuke to those "that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from his right." The evil inhered in the Israelite system of justice as well as in human nature. To correct it, however, the sole appeal was to the conscience of the judges. But the practice was too general, greed and rapacity too compelling in a society but lately growing rich; and conscience was less potent than the lure of material advantage.

The perversion of judgment was the accomplice of other forms of oppression. Wealth was the instrument; the opportunity was presented by the necessities of the poor. The privileges fell to the favored few; the burdens rested upon the mass of common folk. Taxes and the system of forced labor bore most heavily on the small farmer; and in Israel's continual wars, the freeman was withdrawn from his daily work. As it was difficult to lay by a reserve, in a moment of special distress the poor had no recourse but to borrow. He might mortgage his land, or pledge his personal belongings. In default of payment, the security was forfeited; and even the borrower himself or his children might be sold into slavery. The instance cited by Nehemiah, though of later date, is doubtless representative of conditions under the Israelite monarchy.

There were that said, We, our sons and our daughters, are many: let us get corn, that we may eat and live. Some also there were that said, We are mortgaging our fields, and our vineyards, and our houses: let us get corn, because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute upon our fields and our vineyards. . . . And, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants [slaves], and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already: neither is it in our power to help it; for other men have our fields and our vineyards.

Thus were the great landowners enabled to add to their estates, and the rich money-lenders in the cities augmented their wealth. To gratify their passion for power, luxury, and dissipation, riches must be had at any cost. With such incentives, distraint was carried through unpityingly. Ruthless creditors sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. The spoil of the poor man was in their houses. So little was their religion an influence for justice or mercy that the extortioners laid themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drank the wine exacted as a forfeit. The counts in the indictment are various and steadily cumulative. They prove that the hardships suffered by the people resulted not from the conditions of their labor but from oppression and expropriation. It was due to the injustices practised by the powerful that the spokesmen of Yahweh became in action the champions of the inarticulate poor.

Across the murk of corrupt society in Israel the prophets flamed as meteors. To the classes whom they addressed they were a visitation of God, threatening doom; to the people, burdened, wronged, and voiceless, they were a portent, something beyond the dull routine of life, mysterious, but boding good. Yet their relation to circumstances, granted their insight, was altogether natural. Drunkenness, sexual license, and cynical frivolity, dishonesty in business, injustice,

extortion, and all manner of cruel oppression were the vices imputed to the rulers. Yet it was precisely these conditions that gave the prophets occasion and material to elaborate their teaching. Against the dark background of great social wrongs they moulded in higher relief their visions of a new order: justice where before was no justice, righteousness tempered with mercy, as alone pleasing to the true God. In passionate recoil from the iniquities of their immediate present, they swept forward to exalted conceptions of morality and religion. The conditions were but the accidents of human weakness. The visions of the prophets were of the essence of Israel's genius.

XII

JUDAH AND ECLIPSE

THE division of the kingdom under Rehoboam determined the history of the Hebrew nation. So far as concerned its place in world affairs, disunion further weakened a people at best insignificant in numbers. And the fact of separateness shaped the course of development for both Israel and Judah by intensifying their individual differences of environment and character.

Of the two, Israel enjoyed the greater material advantages, in extent of territory and natural resources. But these very advantages led to a speedier end of the state and a swifter moral deterioration of the people. Judah survived its brother kingdom by nearly a century and a half. Poorer and less accessible than the plains of Ephraim, the tablelands of the south were less exposed to the ravage of mighty nations ambitious of conquest and spoils. As compared with the contacts to which Israel lay open, life in the Judahite state was narrower and was concentrated within itself. The kingdom comprised virtually but a single tribe, for it included besides Judah with its affiliated clans only a part of the little tribe of Benjamin. Its relative aloofness from the currents of world affairs, in contrast to the varied turmoil of Israel, was sharpened in the consciousness of the people by the possession of a capital early established as the centre of the nation and associated with its most glorious days. Until the fall of Samaria, the history of Judah was not distinguished by great events.

So long as the kingdom of Israel endured, the fortunes of Judah were linked with its brother state and with Damascus in shifting alliance and conflict. King Asa, the grandson of Rehoboam, took all

the silver and the gold *that were left* in the treasures of the house of Yahweh and of the king's house, and sent them to the king of the Arameans, saying, "There is a league between me and thee, between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me." And Ben-hadad hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. Under Asa's son Jehoshaphat, Judah made peace with Israel, though as a dependent state. The bond was strengthened by the marriage of the prince Jehoram with Athaliah, daughter of Ahab. Of Jehoshaphat it is related with a brief finality that is the more significant because the irony is quite unwitting: "Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber." And an offer of help from the king of Israel failed to persuade him to a second attempt. As a consequence of his alliance with the northern kingdom, Jehoshaphat joined Israel to fight against Moab, in the end unsuccessfully. The victory of Moab encouraged Edom to throw off its long vassalage to Judah, so that Judah lost control of a profitable trade with Arabia. With the defection of certain outlying cities, the kingdom suffered a further loss of territory and of prestige.

Ahaziah, son of Jehoram and Athaliah, was slain by order of the rebel Jehu in the hour of his triumph over Ahab's house. The death of the king should have terminated the place and power of the queen-mother. But Athaliah, true daughter of the Phœnician Jezebel, would not yield without a struggle. By the murder of all the seed royal, except the infant prince Jehoash, she made herself queen of Judah, the only woman in Israelite history to hold the throne. Her reign of six years was the sole break in the absolute succession of the line of David.

By violence Athaliah seized the throne, by violence she met her end. The priest Jehoiada, whose wife, a sister of the late king, had hidden the infant Jehoash and kept him in the Temple precincts, brought forward the little prince, now seven years of age, and proclaimed him king. By manipulating the armed forces whose function was to guard the Temple and the palace, Jehoiada caused Athaliah to be slain. The reckless bloodshed that Athaliah initiated and that afterwards recoiled upon herself was the first instance of dynastic murder in Judah's history through a period of nearly a century, in striking contrast to continual revolution in Israel.

Of the forty-year reign of Jehoash the Book of Kings records only that he repaired the Temple; that in order to avert an attack upon Jerusalem by the Arameans, he delivered to their king Hazael of Damascus all the gold of the Temple and palace treasuries together with all the sacred vessels; and finally that he perished at the hand of certain of his servants who conspired against him. The motive of the conspiracy is not clear, for the murdered king was succeeded, without comment in the narrative, by his son Amaziah. So soon as the throne was secured to him, the new monarch put to death the servants who had slain his father. In some measure Amaziah restored the lost power of his kingdom, for he won a decisive victory over Edom, which had thrown off the Judahite yoke half a century before. But he proceeded to forfeit more than he had gained, for emboldened by his success, he challenged Israel to battle. At Beth-shemesh of Judah, he was put vastly to the worse: his army was routed and he himself was captured; the enemy broke into Jerusalem and despoiled it. Amaziah outlived the victorious king of Israel fifteen years; then like his father, he was slain by conspirators. The example set by Athaliah, daughter of Israel and Phœnicia, was bearing fruit in Judah.

It is related that "all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah." Possibly the conspiracy to which Amaziah had fallen a victim, unlike the plot of Jehoash's servants, was a popular uprising in protest against the misfortunes the monarch had brought upon his kingdom. But especially significant of the democratic form and temper of the Hebrew nation is the fact that the succession of the legitimate heir to the throne was accomplished at the behest of the people.

Azariah reigned fifty-two years. The Book of Chronicles, which names him Uzziah, credits him with many wise measures to enhance the strength and well-being of the diminished kingdom he had inherited. He fortified Jerusalem with towers; and he made engines, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and upon the battlements, wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones. He built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for he had much cattle; in the lowland also, and in the plain: and he had husbandmen and vinedressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields. Moreover, he recruited an army of 307,500 fighting men; and the officers numbered 2600. For all the host he prepared shields and spears and helmets and coats of mail and bows and stones for slinging. He warred against the Philistines, broke down the walls of their cities, and built other cities in their country; he fought the Arabians, and laid the Ammonites under tribute; and his name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt (2 Chron. 26 6–15). Doubtless there is some slight basis of fact in this late chronicle; in passing, it affords picturesque glimpses of Judah's manner of life. The Book of Kings records that Azariah built Elath and restored it to Judah. Thus the kingdom regained control of trade by way of the Red Sea.

From long years in shadow Judah emerged into half-lights of pros-

perity, which seemed to catch something of the afterglow of Solomon's splendor. The words of the prophet Isaiah, whose call came to him in the year that king Uzziah died, reveal the heightened importance which Judah's new contact with world affairs brought to the little kingdom. The people are filled with customs from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners. And their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots. Their land also is full of idols. But there shall be a day of Yahweh upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery.

The reign of Azariah was contemporaneous with that of Jeroboam II of Israel. The length of each reign spanned more than a generation, falling in the first half of the eighth century. At this period both kingdoms attained a position of power and prosperity from which they speedily declined and which they never reached again. Damascus, repulsed by Joash of Israel and his son Jeroboam, had withdrawn its armies from the westland. Assyria was not yet come in force.

King Azariah, smitten with leprosy in his old age, yielded his place to his son Jotham, who judged the people of the land. Jotham's reign of sixteen years, as regent and as king, is distinguished in the narrative only by the incident that he built the upper gate of the house of Yahweh. His son and successor Ahaz, who reigned sixteen years, played a more significant, though an inglorious, part. Besieged in Jerusalem by Rezin king of Damascus and Pekah of Israel, he defended his capital successfully, but he was obliged to cede to the Arameans the port of Elath, which his grandfather had won for

Judah. Feeling his sole strength unequal to his two enemies, Ahaz sent messengers bearing treasures to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria; and in terms that recall the phrases of the Amarna letters, seven centuries before, he humbly besought his aid. "I am thy servant and thy son: come up and save me." In response to this appeal, which fell in with his own purposes of conquest, the Assyrian attacked Damascus, captured the city, and slew Rezin its king (732). For the moment Judah escaped the peril of its foes from the north, yet Ahaz had still to fight his southern neighbors, but with ill success. Upon the triumph of Assyria, Ahaz went in person to Damascus to present himself as a vassal before Tiglath-pileser. There he saw an altar which so impressed him that he sent to his priest in Jerusalem the fashion and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof, with command to rear its duplicate in his own capital. Whatever the act signified for Ahaz, it symbolized concretely the opening of Judah to foreign influences in religion and culture, to which the little nation, contrary to its old proud sense of exclusiveness, had long been yielding under pressure and to which it finally succumbed.

Ahaz, weak-willed and perverse, impaired enormously the resources and political advantage of the kingdom that had descended to him from his wise grandfather Azariah. Partly in consequence of his policy, his son and successor Hezekiah was confronted with grave problems of statecraft. But other circumstances contributed to his difficulties; for increasingly Judah was swept from its remoteness into the conflicts of petty states struggling to maintain their independence, as the tide of Assyrian conquest surged westward and southward into Egypt.

The tide, which now threatened to engulf Judah, was nearing its

flood. Though irresistible as it culminated, it had been slow in coming. For nearly two centuries Assyria had on occasion intervened actively in the westland by right of might. Its justification was its power to do so; its motive was lust of conquest and spoils. But already before this period, the great empire had a long history. Early in the second millennium, as the ancient majesty of Babylonia declined under its kings of alien Kassite strain, the territory to the north along the Tigris river, held by a people of kindred race and language with the Babylonians, and heirs to their culture and religion, became the dominant state. After Assyria through several centuries had finally established its independence of Babylonian control, the new kingdom reached out to conquer. About 1300 Adadnirari I annexed territory toward the west and assumed the title "King of the World." His son Shalmaneser I, crossing the headwaters of the Euphrates, laid the country under tribute. Tiglath-pileser, about 1100, having received from his god Ashur the command to extend the boundaries of his kingdom, pushed on to the land of the Hittites and the "upper sea of the setting sun." Then followed for Assyria two centuries of lapse and obscurity, while new peoples and states rose to power in the west, — notably the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, the Phœnician cities, the Philistines, and the Hebrews. Early in the ninth century the colossus stirred again. Ashurnazirpal III compelled tribute from Phœnicia and northern Syria; and his son Shalmaneser II struck at Damascus. In the battle of Karkar, 854, Assyria was checked for the moment by the Arameans, allied with the kings of eleven other peoples, among whom was Ahab of Israel. But the great empire returned to the attack persistently. Ahab's successor on the throne of Israel, the murderer Jehu, was forced to pay tribute. However, Assyria suffered reverses, for it had to fight also in the east, the south and the north. During the first half of the eighth

century, the aggressor had so far withdrawn from the west as to make possible for the two Hebrew states the prosperous reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Azariah of Judah.

A rebellion at the capital Nineveh placed a general of the army on the Assyrian throne. The new king, assuming the name Tiglath-pileser III, proceeded to restore and augment the diminished territories of the empire. A campaign in the west brought Syria once more under control; Menahem of Israel paid tribute. Pekah, who made himself king of Israel by the murder of Menahem's son, joined with Rezin of Damascus to attack Judah. Its youthful king Ahaz appealed to Assyria. Then came Tiglath-pileser and took . . . "Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and he carried them captive to Assyria." Pekah's successor paid tribute. In 732 Damascus fell to the invader. Among the states which the conqueror laid under tribute were Phœnician cities, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and certain kingdoms of Arabia. On the horizon of Israel and Judah the menace of Assyria expanded as an ever-swelling cloud, charged with portents of destruction.

The two small Hebrew states had little to gain and everything to lose by contact with the ambitious, devouring empire. The culture of Assyria was inherited from Babylonia; and the older empire a millennium before had impressed its civilization upon the west. In the seventh century, indeed, vassal Judah aped the manners of its conquerors, but to the detriment of the old Israelite simplicity, and adopted their gods and modes of worship in utter infidelity to Yahweh. The national character of the Assyrians, directed by the sustained policy of its kings, compelled the state to its course of territorial expansion, at the cost of peoples it subjected to its ruthless power. Assyria was primarily, if not wholly, a military nation. Its chief divinity, Ashur, was god of war. The king habitually took the field in person. Significantly, the national love of blood-letting was

exemplified in the favorite pastime of the kings; many of their inscriptions celebrate their prowess as hunters of big game. The armies were recruited from the native peasantry, until the conquered peoples were numerous enough to furnish soldiers for the imperial campaigns. The artisans and the merchants of the cities were of foreign strain; fine work and articles of luxury were the spoils of the nations subjected to tribute. The great armies of foot troops, equipped with spear and bow, were reënforced by cavalry and chariots, and supplied with huge engines for the assault of beleaguered towns. If enemies dared to resist the formidable legions of the Great King, terror was intended to strike their hearts by practices of extreme cruelty. Thus Ashurnazirpal III (885–860) records:

With battle and slaughter I assaulted and took the city. Three thousand warriors I slew in battle. Their booty and possessions, cattle, sheep, I carried away; many captives I burned with fire. Many of their soldiers I took alive: of some I cut off the hands and limbs; of others the noses, ears, and arms; of many soldiers I put out the eyes. I reared a column of the living and a column of heads. I hung up on high their heads on trees in the vicinity of their city. Their boys and girls I burned up in the flame. I devastated the city, dug it up, in fire I burned it; I annihilated it.

The kingdom grew to empire and gained fabulously in wealth by a threefold procedure according to circumstances: by the direct annexation of territory, by acquiring spheres of influence, and by extortion of enormous and crushing tribute. In the administration of subject regions, Assyria devised a new system of control. Resident governors responsible to the king were stationed in conquered districts to enforce loyalty to their overlord and to ensure payment of the required tribute as it came due annually. Further to break possible resistance to the Assyrian rule, the native populations were de-

ported in large numbers, and the territories were settled by alien colonists from other parts of the empire. As the organization of the state in its farthest ramifications for purposes of war made Assyria the greatest power of offence, so its sole policy of conquest supported by its system of imperial administration made it a most potent agent of destruction in trampling down the independence of small nations, with no compensating advantage to their own culture. The Hebrew states really profited by their contact with Assyria, only in so far as their men of vision were able to draw deeper spiritual meanings out of material disaster. Other empires which had invaded the coastland brought benefits in their train. So Babylonia and Egypt, creative, intellectual, skilled in the arts, were civilizing forces. Assyria, on the contrary, materialistic and unsparing in its brutal might, was a scourge.

Tiglath-pileser's successor Shalmaneser IV, after subduing Phœnicia, laid siege to Samaria, because he found that Hoshea of Israel was conspiring with Egypt against him. Shalmaneser reigned, however, but five years. A few months after his death, in 722, Samaria was taken by Sargon II.

The threat to Judah was drawing nearer. Hezekiah, son of Ahaz who had obsequiously paid court to the Assyrian monarch, ascended the throne. At this moment conditions seemed to favor a new policy in the westland, — rebellion against imperial rule and resistance to its further pretensions. Sargon was engaged in the east, quelling revolt in Babylonia. Already in the city states of Syria and Canaan, certain groups, in order to check Assyria, were advocating an alliance with Egypt. The empire of the conquering Pharaohs had long since disintegrated, and the several districts were dominated by Ethiopia; now such rulers as were able to shape Egyp-

tian policy were in self-defence intriguing in Canaan to stem the Assyrian tide. But Sargon proved himself master of the situation. In two campaigns he punished the rebellious cities of Phœnicia, Canaan, and Philistia, defeated the Egyptians at Raphia, subdued Edom and Moab, exacted tribute from Arabian chieftains, and so reëstablished his authority throughout the westland.

In 705 Sargon was succeeded by Sennacherib. Again the change of monarchs, with its attendant problems of maintaining sovereignty in the provinces near at home, furnished occasion for uprisings in the west. Sidon in Phœnicia and the Philistine cities of Ashkelon and Ekron revolted. The people of Ekron deposed their king Padi, who favored Assyria, and delivered him in chains to the custody of Hezekiah. Even from far-distant Babylonia, the Chaldean adventurer Merodach-baladan, who more than once had grasped the throne of Babylon from the Assyrian suzerain and again aspired to independent rule, sent emissaries to Jerusalem to incite resistance to the common oppressor. Whether the mission came earlier or later in Hezekiah's reign, it shows how closely involved were the wide-reaching relationships of the eastern world. Contrary to the warnings of the prophet Isaiah, the Judean king had yielded to the Egyptian party at his capital, and joined the insurgents. Sennacherib appeared in the west, reduced the Phœnician cities, defeated the Egyptians at Eltekeh, restored his authority in the cities of Philistia, and compelling the release of Padi at the hand of Hezekiah, placed him again on the throne of Ekron. The Assyrian then turned to punish Judah. Sennacherib thus records his doings:

As for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted himself to my yoke, forty-six strong towns, fortresses, and smaller towns in their circuit which are innumerable, by destruction through battering rams, and advancing of siege engines, assault . . . I besieged, I cap-

tured; 200,150 men, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, and flocks without number I brought forth from their midst, I reckoned as spoil. Himself like a bird in a cage in the midst of Jerusalem, his royal town, I shut; ramparts around him I drew; those who came forth from the gateway of his town I caused to return. His towns which I had plundered I separated from his land, and gave them to Mitinti king of Ashdod, Padi king of Amkarruna [Ekron] and Zil-bel king of Haziti [Gaza], and so diminished his land. To their former tribute their yearly gift the payment due to my rule I added [and] imposed it upon them. Hezekiah himself the dread of the splendor of my rule overpowered. The Urbi [Arabians] and his faithful soldiers which he had introduced to strengthen Jerusalem his royal town laid down their arms. Along with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones of value, large lapi-lazuli stones, ivory couches, ivory seats, elephant-hide, ivory . . . wood, urkarinnu wood, all kinds of valuable treasure, and his daughters, his palace wives, male and female musicians he caused to be brought after me into Nineveh my royal town; and he sent his [mounted] envoy to present tribute and to render homage.

The Hebrew narrative confirms and supplements the inscription of the Assyrian king. Sennacherib, having reduced many of the fortified towns of Judah, was besieging Lachish, not more than thirty miles distant from Jerusalem. King Hezekiah, coerced by the overwhelming march of the invader and the menace to his own capital, offered submission and paid tribute. "I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me I will bear." To fulfil the payment of thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver, he took all the silver in the Temple and the treasures of the palace, and was constrained to cut off the gold overlaid on the Temple doors and pillars. Lachish fell; and Sennacherib proceeded to the assault of Libnah. Meanwhile the Egyptians, to aid their hard-pressed allies of Philistia and Judah, advanced into the coastland, only to meet defeat

at Eltekeh. The Assyrians, though victorious, were not secure with the strong fortress of Jerusalem threatening their flank or rear. Already Hezekiah had set in order its defences, which had long suffered damage and neglect. He replenished the store of weapons in the royal arsenal. He repaired the many breaches in the fortress walls. Within and without the city he demolished houses to reënforce the ramparts and to clear the field for fighting. By building a reservoir between the two walls, he provided a supply of water in case of siege. (Is. 22 8–11) The measures of precaution proved to be well taken.

The siege followed. Not satisfied with such submission as Hezekiah had rendered by protestation of fealty and payment of tribute, Sennacherib "broke the covenant" and sent a great army to invest Jerusalem. With the forces were the Tartan or general-in-chief, and two other officials, the Rabsaris and the Rabshakeh, who were charged with a diplomatic mission. The Assyrian legates were met outside the walls by three deputies of King Hezekiah. Then ensued a colloquy in the best manner, dramatic, florid, yet with a keen sense of realities, adroitly blending grandiloquence and subtlety. The Rabshakeh addresses the Judahites:

Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest, but they are but vain words, There is counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou hast rebelled against me? Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. But if ye say unto me, We trust in Yahweh our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away [thus citing the king himself as witness against his own cause], and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? Now, therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my master the king of

Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses [adding a masterstroke of ironical contempt], if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then canst thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come up without Yahweh against this place to destroy it? Yahweh said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Writhing under the lash of this insolent irony, and shocked by the impious play with the name of Yahweh, the Judahites interrupt:

Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Aramean language; for we understand it: and speak not with us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

But the Rabshakeh continues with rising scorn:

Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit on the wall [who will be forced as a result of the siege] to eat their own dung, and to drink their own water with you?

Whereupon the Rabshakeh, going over the heads of the royal deputies, addresses the populace gathered on the wall. The accomplished, many-languaged diplomat, conscious of his mastery, cries out in a loud voice, speaking Hebrew:

Hear ye the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh, saying, Yahweh will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and [as contrasted with conditions in case of siege] eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine,

a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive-trees and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, Yahweh will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah? have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that they have delivered their country out of my hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, Answer him not. Then the deputies came to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh. At their report the king was panic-stricken, and sent for counsel to Isaiah. The prophet returned this assurance: "Thus saith Yahweh, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return to his own land."

The prophecy was fulfilled. Sennacherib suddenly withdrew his forces from Canaan. Perhaps more serious disturbances in the east required his presence at home. Or his armies may have been smitten with a pestilence. In the result, Jerusalem was saved (701).

For a moment the relation of Judah to the great turmoil seething around the little kingdom emerges into clear light. The inscriptions of the Assyrian monarchs of this period recite their achievements in satisfying detail. Even a Greek historiographer, two centuries later, catches a glimpse of the passing of Sennacherib (Herodotus, II, 141). The Hebrew narrative dealing with the reign of Hezekiah becomes exceptionally full concerning political affairs. Finally the prophecies of Isaiah vividly reveal persons in action and events in the making, and they picture with instant liveliness the reaction of Jerusalem

to the crisis. The abundance of material which illuminates this epoch excites regret at the meagre remains that have survived as sole memorials of the troubled fortunes of Israel and Judah. Compared with the dramatic force of these chapters of history and prophetic eloquence, the Hebrew Book of Kings for the most part seems but a mosaic pieced together out of fragments, and these fragments apparently not the most significant that might have been gathered.

Toward the end of the eighth century, Judah by exception rose to leadership in the politics of Canaan. Hezekiah "smote the Philistines unto Gaza and the borders thereof." That he exercised a kind of suzerainty over the cities of Philistia may be inferred from the fact that the Ekronites entrusted their deposed king to his keeping. Judah was in close contact, whether friendly or hostile, with Egypt, Edom, Moab, Arabia, the Phœnician cities, the kingdom of Damascus, and the empire of Assyria. The little fortress-capital nested in the Judean hills was a meeting point for emissaries from the far corners of the earth, from Babylon in the east to Ethiopia in the distant south. Inevitably these contacts influenced the manners and morals of the people.

Hezekiah was succeeded by his twelve-year-old son Manasseh, who reigned fifty-five years. The half-chapter in the Hebrew narrative devoted to this long span records only the conduct of the king in matters of religion. The young monarch proved recreant to the old faith and the pure worship of the religion of Yahweh. He built altars for all the host of heaven. He made his son to pass through the fire, and practised augury, and used enchantments, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards. Already in Judah the example of Assyria had prevailed. Ashur, whose cruel legions were grinding the earth to his feet, was mightier than Yahweh, whose peo-

ple were cowering in mortal fear. The glittering lewd customs of the east had triumphed over the simple ancestral ways. Then came the terrible anxieties of these cumulative years. The menacing Assyrian advance, on, on, to the very gates of Jerusalem, found a sudden release in miraculous deliverance. Revealed anew by the mouth of Isaiah his prophet, Yahweh had shown himself powerful, — for a moment. But the tension had been too great: nerves snapped; and the reaction was extreme. The people again abandoned themselves to license and the evil practices that had long since gained the upper hand. The champions of Yahweh were forced into retreat by fanatic persecutions. Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another. Compelled to silence, yet the true leaders and teachers of the people were not inactive. But their opportunity was not yet come.

Of Manasseh's son Amon, when he succeeded to the throne, it is told that he walked in all the ways of his father. After he had reigned but two years, he was slain by his own servants. But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his stead. It is possible that the servants of Amon who conspired against him were prompted by zeal for the old religion, which had suffered so grievously; when they found that any hopes of reform they had placed in the new king were disappointed, they murdered him in revenge for the persecutions inflicted by his father. Amon may have been a favorite with the people because he proved as indulgent as his predecessor toward their licentious worship; and so in their turn, they avenged themselves on the murderers of Amon. The prince Josiah, whom the people raised to the throne, was only a boy of eight years, as yet untried; and they may have expected to hold him to their cause.

For seventeen years Judah went its way unchanged. Then hap-

pened at Jerusalem an event which smote the little kingdom like tempest and earthquake. The forces that broke convulsively upon the nation had been gathering silently underground. Apostasy triumphant had persecuted but could not crush utterly the champions of Yahweh; and biding their time, they plotted a counterstroke. With overwhelming suddenness, their success was immediate and complete.

It is related that King Josiah sent Shaphan his scribe to Hilkiah, the high priest, with directions concerning the repair of the Temple. Abruptly, without explanation of the circumstances, the narrative continues: "And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Yahweh. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and said, . . . Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes." Thereupon the king, to inquire of Yahweh concerning the book, sent Hilkiah and Shaphan with three others, not to the Temple, but to a prophetess, Huldah, wife of the keeper of the wardrobe. The answer which the prophetess returned to the king was compounded of threat and promise. Yahweh would bring evil upon the nation, even as the book declared; but the king, because his heart was tender and he humbled himself before Yahweh, would be spared the sight of the evil that impended, and he would be gathered to his grave in peace, — a prophecy which was not fulfilled. When he heard the report of his messengers, Josiah summoned his subjects to appear before him, the elders, the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant. Then the king pledged himself solemnly to walk after Yahweh, and to keep

all his commandments as set forth in the book; and all the people stood to the covenant.

Forthwith the king proceeded to give effect to the prescriptions of the Book of the Law. He purged the Temple of all the paraphernalia of heathen worship, burning the vessels and the Ashera. He took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the Temple, and he burned the chariots of the sun. The altars that were on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of Yahweh, did the king break down; and he destroyed the houses of the sodomites in the Temple precincts, where the women wove hangings for the Ashera. Thence outward, he defiled Topheth, in the valley of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech; and likewise he defiled the high places, outside the city, that Solomon had built for the gods of Sidon, Moab, and Ammon. Destroying thus the symbols and equipment of heathenism, he moved also to suppress the personnel. "He put down the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven." "Moreover them that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the teraphim, and the idols . . . did Josiah put away."

The Book of the Law, which proved so cataclysmic for the popular worship, is now comprised in chapters 12 to 26 (or 5 to 26) and part of chapter 28 of the Book of Deuteronomy. It was the work of a group of zealous men, writing in the prophetic spirit, who devised this method of appeal to the national heart and will, when other means of persuasion or constraint had signally failed. The impassioned deeds of prophets like Elijah and Elisha had not availed to

save the northern kingdom. Unheeded, the flaming summons to repentance and righteousness voiced by rapt preachers like Amos, Hosea, and Micah, like Isaiah, whose lips were touched by a glowing stone from off the altar of his vision, seemed to have flickered into silence. To restore the people of Yahweh to their appointed course, to recall the nation to its ancestral loyalties, required a new mode of address, supported by compelling authority and charged with the utmost potency of incitement. The attack, conceived in the shadows of persecution and matured in secrecy, when the moment came was launched with instant success. Emerging suddenly from mysterious obscurity into the light reflected from the throne, the Book of the Law straightway commanded full acceptance by king and people.

The reform was fraught with immense consequences for the national culture. In the name of Moses, hallowed in tradition as Israel's supreme lawgiver, the Book of the Law, "found" in the Temple, designated Jerusalem as the single exclusive sanctuary of the nation. This rigid centralization of worship tended to constrict still further a people at best small and intolerantly self-conscious, and to stamp it with a single impress; moreover the assault upon all foreign cults rewakened in Israel its sense of separate and peculiar destiny. In some aspects a definite gain for religion, this drift toward concentration represented a loss in the range of popular interests. Whatever of variety may have gladdened the people in their spontaneous rites at the local sanctuaries received a sobering cast from the imposing shadow of the Temple. As the trivial acts of every day were divested of religious import, for only at Jerusalem might men sacrifice and rejoice before Yahweh, so religion became specialized and more remote from workaday affairs. For the intimacy of free communion close at home, the reform substituted the burdensome complexities of a more elaborate ritual in distant Jerusalem. The familiar priest

of the little neighborhood gave place to the unknown official functionaries at the capital. The warm spoken word of friendly intercourse with the country priest, the seer, the man of God, yielded to the cold impersonality of written law.

So the development of the nation was given a new direction. In little more than a generation, Judah went into exile as a nation, whose teachers were still the prophets. After fifty years it returned to the ruined Jerusalem as a holy congregation, the repository of the sacred law. The Book of the Law, which King Josiah promulgated, marked the parting of the ways.

Of the first seventeen years of Josiah's reign, down to the year of the Reform in 621, the Hebrew historians recount nothing, for their attention is wholly centred on the great events that followed the discovery of the Book of the Law at Jerusalem. Yet great events too were happening in the world, of tragic consequence to the little kingdom. Within the half-century which comprised the lax rule of Manasseh, the Assyrian Esarhaddon (680–668) held Judah in vassalage; and with greater success than attended his father, the baffled Sennacherib, he began the subjugation of Egypt, which his son Ashurbanipal completed. During the reign of this king (668–626), the Assyrian tide reached its flood, — and then receded. At length forced to relax its grip on the West, and stormed by enemies from every side, the grandiose empire crumbled swiftly. The very extent of its conquests had weakened at the centre its power of resistance; its far-flung borders, which as independent states might have served for buffer territory, invited the attack of peoples hostile to Assyria, who pressed against them, and who finally struck at Nineveh itself.

The dominance of the Semites, which had prevailed in the East for millennia, was shattered, as other races now emerged to contest their

mastery. Nations of Asia Minor, the Lydians and the Phrygians, were implicated in the web that Assyria had woven across the world. From vast regions beyond the Caucasus mountains swarmed the Scythians, who ravaged outlying provinces of the empire, swept through Canaan, and menaced Egypt; though they did not penetrate the centre of Assyria, the impact of these hordes shook the whole structure of the loosely cemented empire. In the north, tribes of Aryan and Iranian stock had consolidated to form the kingdom of the Medes. In the south, some two centuries since, a wave of migration from the desert had brought the Chaldeans into Babylonia. Though the territory of this once mighty kingdom was ruled from Nineveh, yet under the impulse of the newcomers Babylon had long striven to make itself an independent capital, with varying success. At last the Chaldean Nabopolassar, viceroy of Babylon, combined with the Medes for a final assault upon the sovereign empire. Nineveh was taken, in 606, and utterly destroyed. With the fall of its capital, Assyria as a nation perished. Out of the ruins was built an empire of the Medes. And southward, Babylonia passed to the Chaldeans, who assumed also the Assyrian rights in Syria and Canaan.

The dissolution of the eastern colossus was foreseen in the West. The kingdoms of the Nile had already thrown off the Assyrian yoke; and now united again under a single native ruler, Egypt pushed northward to share in the spoils of the crumbling empire, hoping also to reëstablish its ancient hegemony in the coastland. As its armies passed through Canaan, their advance was barred by Judah. It is hardly likely that Josiah acted on orders from his Assyrian overlord. Rather, noting that Assyrian control was loosened, he had no mind to exchange one master for another; and so he threw his forces, led by himself, across the forward path of Egypt. Daringly conceived, the move proved fatal, for in battle at Megiddo, in 608, Josiah was slain.

At the moment, Egypt was paramount in Canaan. The people of Judah, intervening, as so often in their history, in the succession, raised a younger son of Josiah, by name Jehoahaz, to the throne. But the Pharaoh, who had reached Riblah on the Orontes, made him captive, and laid upon his kingdom a heavy tribute. The captive Jehoahaz was sent to Egypt, and there he died. Meanwhile the Pharaoh placed on the throne of Judah the deposed king's elder brother Eliakim, making him change his name to Jehoiakim. Not the difference of name in itself but the fact of change was significant, for it betokened the Pharaoh's authority as suzerain. Dutifully the new king paid the tribute, exacting the money from his people by taxation; it may be fancied that little remained to the kingdom, not wealthy at best, which had been despoiled by a long succession of rapacious victors. Judah continued subject to Egypt three years. In 605, at Carchemish on the Euphrates, the Egyptians were defeated by the Chaldeans, and driven back within their borders. The king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land; for the king of Babylon took, from the brook of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained unto the king of Egypt (2 K. 24 7).

In command of the Chaldeans at the battle of Carchemish was Nebuchadrezzar, son of King Nabopolassar, who survived his triumph over the ruined Assyria hardly two years. On news of his father's death, the young prince hastened back to Babylon to become king in his stead. On the return of Nebuchadrezzar to the west the following year, Jehoikim, former vassal of the Pharaoh, offered submission to the Chaldean. Three years later he rebelled; whereupon his overlord sent against him Chaldean troops, together with bands of subject peoples, the Arameans (Edomites?), Moabites, and Ammonites. Though the result of these expeditions is not related, nor the manner of the king's death, it may be assumed that Judah was

not subdued. For Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin had not reigned three months, when a Chaldean army laid siege to Jerusalem. In person Nebuchadrezzar appeared before the city; and Jehoiachin, with the queen-mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers, went out to him and surrendered, in 597. The victor stripped the Temple and the palace of their treasures; and he carried captive to Babylon the king himself, all the princes, all the great men, all the craftsmen and smiths; none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

The stroke was crushing but not final. With the tenacious spirit of its race, which adversity could not break but rather seemed to strengthen, the nation survived for ten years more. The conqueror set upon the Judahite throne Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah, and changed his name to Zedekiah. But the vassal, still indomitable, rebelled; and in the ninth year of his reign, the Chaldeans, led by Nebuchadrezzar, again invested Jerusalem. Resisting formidable siege-works constructed against it, the city held out for a year and a half. At last famine drove the defenders to a sortie. Through a breach in the walls the king attempted to escape with his forces. The Chaldeans, pursuing, overtook them in the plain about Jericho, captured the king, and scattered his army. Zedekiah was brought to Nebuchadrezzar, who was now at Riblah. His sons were slain before his eyes, he himself was blinded, and sent in chains to Babylon. The Chaldeans burned Jerusalem, broke down the walls, and destroyed or carried off the metal furnishings of the Temple. Priests, officials, and others, numbering more than seventy, were put to death by Nebuchadrezzar. Except for a remnant throughout the countryside, the people of Judah were driven into exile in Babylon (586).

To administer what remained of the shattered kingdom, now a mere province of the Chaldean empire, Nebuchadrezzar appointed as governor Gedaliah, grandson of Shaphan the scribe, who had

brought the Book of the Law to King Josiah. Stationed at the ancient sanctuary of Mizpah, for Jerusalem was desolate, the governor gathered about him remnants of the people, refugees who had fled across the Jordan, and detachments of the Judahite army that had escaped capture. But his efforts to establish the state anew on the ruins of the old came to nothing. Within a few months, a conspiracy led by Ishmael of the seed royal, incited thereto by the Ammonites, compassed the assassination of Gedaliah, and the murder of Judahites and of some of the Chaldean garrison. In fear of the imperial vengeance, the little group which represented the wreck of the Judahite nation fled into Egypt. The "people of the land," who still clung to their native soil, disappeared from history.

Out of the ruin and dispersion of Judah, the sole hope of a future for the Hebrew people lay with the exiles in Babylon. Here the eternal qualities of their race, intensified by their varied experience as a nation, — their tenacity, their proud self-consciousness, their persistence under adversity and patience in suffering, their refined power of faith and profound spiritual insight, — still held them together as a little community, which amid the merge and welter of a vast empire yet felt itself exclusive, convinced of a mission and a peculiar destiny. When the Chaldean Babylon surrendered to a new master, Cyrus the Persian, the unregarded alien colony were permitted to return to the changed homeland of their fathers. But Israel itself was changed. The nation was no more. The people survived, and maintained their individuality as a theocracy. In different conditions therefore, their genius henceforward found expression in different terms. The sun of Israel emerged from its eclipse to light the way of Judaism.

During the few centuries of their national existence, Israel and

Judah were tiny states in a great world. Their passing left hardly a trace in the flow and ebb of empires. Yet their political insignificance, equalled by their failure in material accomplishment, but throws into higher relief their incalculable achievement for the spirit of man. Within cultural limitations and assailed by external disaster, unfolded the soul. As successive calamities closed in upon the nation, threatening its extinction, so much the more confidently its true leaders affirmed spiritual values.

In so far as Israel was impelled to forms of art expression, its culture found permanent embodiment only in its literature. Its influence in shaping social conditions was exercised in the drafting of laws, fused in the passion for righteousness which kindled the prophets to fiery speech. What the prophets wrought, and how, has yet to be told. Illumined by their vision, tempered in their ardor, the genius of Israel uttered itself supremely in religion.

XIII

SCRIPTURE IN THE WEAVING

The Hebrew monarchy, from its beginnings with Saul to the overthrow of the Judahite state, endured less than five hundred years. Of this troubled span, from morning through swift brilliant noon-day to late eclipse, Israel wrote its memories, in which reëchoed ancestral traditions from out the twilight centuries before the dawn. But the record now is brief and pieced of fragments. Songs and tales, historical narratives, codes of law, and sermons of the prophets went to make up the nation's literature. All that has survived of this varied material is gathered in a book of larger compass, which later generations sealed with the impress of unique sanctity. In the long process of compilation, much was sacrificed to the purposes and methods of successive editors. The precious residue gained immortality, as the literature of Israel was wrought into the sacred scriptures of Judaism, the Old Testament of Christian faith.

Israel's story is told in the group of writings extending from Genesis to Kings.[1] These writings are woven together of four great narratives, each the work of a separate school at a distinct epoch. The oldest narrative took shape in the Judahite kingdom, probably toward the middle of the ninth century; already complex in its earliest written form, it received additions with the lapse of time. This strand begins at Genesis 2 4b; in the terminology of Old Testament criticism, it is designated as J. About a century later, a second and independent narrative, beginning in fragmentary fashion in Genesis 15 and appearing more fully in Genesis 20, was produced in the

[1] Except the Book of Ruth.

northern or Ephraimite kingdom; it is designated as E. The third narrative was drafted by the school of writers who formulated the Book of the Law, found in the Temple in 621, which was incorporated in the scriptures as Deuteronomy; this strand is known as D. Finally a hundred years after the Exile, a group of Jewish priests in Babylon wrote a history of their people, carrying it back to the creation of the world; their account is designated as P. This narrative, latest in age, comes first in position, for with it the Book of Genesis begins. Of the two opening chapters of Genesis, presenting different versions of the same theme, the first chapter is younger than the second by some four centuries.

The four narratives suffered many mutations. The methods of the Hebrew historian were ingenuous and free. Writing anonymously himself, he had no conception of property in literature; he took what he wanted, without acknowledgment and without obligation. As he told his story, with his own material he combined prior texts, abridging, supplementing, rearranging, even altering the sense, as suited his fancy or his motive. To the extent that he impressed his personality on the manner or the purpose of his work, he was an author; but in result, as in procedure, he was an editor or redactor. By such methods and processes the Hebrew scriptures came into being and attained their present form.

The actual complexity of the text is difficult even to conceive, as it is impossible to follow in all its ramifications. The main course of growth, however, may be traced with some degree of certainty. Each basic document was itself composed of divers elements. The earliest, J, was compiled from older writings and from traditions; likewise the others. Subsequently each original basic narrative passed through the hands of redactors, who made changes and additions. Then two narratives were combined, forming a unit dif-

ferent from the mere sum of the parts, for the combination was modified by further editing. The resultant document was compiled with a third narrative to constitute a still larger whole. Finally toward the end of the fifth century, the whole JED, in its turn was forced into P; and the completed work is designated, according to the order in which the documents appear in the text, as PJED. Sometimes two or more passages dealing with the same theme follow in succession, sometimes they are interwoven sentence by sentence; the editors employ every possible method of combination. The process of original composition, editing, and compilation reached its term only with the closing of the Canon of the "Law and the Prophets" about 200 B.C., having spanned more than seven hundred years.

By reversing the course, analysis unravels the tangled skein. The four component narratives differed markedly in fibre, color, and style. Since they have preserved their individuality throughout their vagrant transmission, criticism has been able in general to recover each strand in its pristine substance, and by distinguishing what is primary from later additions and modifications, to assign a given passage to the period of its origin. Through ages Israel's power of expression wrought for itself many and varied forms, — poem, oral tradition, written legend, authentic history, legal code, and prophetic discourse. When the complex is resolved into its elements, it becomes possible to characterize the literary genius of Israel in its concrete manifestations, to define for each example its significance to the age that produced it and its qualities as literature for all time.

Israel began to record its present experiences and its memories of the past in the golden noon-day of the monarchy. The wandering Hebrew tribes who fought their way into Canaan had little need of writing; for heroic moments in their obscure fortunes lived again in

tradition current on the lips of men. The union of the tribes under the monarchy, waking in them the consciousness of nationality, invested their lot with a new dignity and importance, and quickened them to a keener sense of an historic past now flowering in the glories of the present. By a happy coincidence, as the compelling, romantic figure of David and his illustrious deeds for the nation furnished incentive to record events in enduring form, the ample peace of Solomon's effulgent reign afforded leisure for contemplation and retrospect. Occasion was matched by opportunity.

The means of writing were at Israel's disposal, though in what epoch the Hebrews began to use the art for their own purposes cannot be determined. Writing, in the form of hieroglyphs, had been practised in Egypt from extreme antiquity; and the nomad tribes in bondage there may have brought with them into Canaan the knowledge that such an art existed. Before the Hebrews entered the land, however, the Canaanites in the fifteenth century employed, as the Amarna tablets prove, the cuneiform script of Babylonia. Then there was devised, presumably between 1400 and 1000, but by what people is uncertain, the alphabetic method of writing, which marked an advance upon the syllabic characters of the cuneiform. This alphabet became the property of the western Semitic world, used by the Canaanites, the Phœnicians, the Arameans, the Moabites; centuries afterwards it served as the prototype of the Greek and Roman script. As the Hebrews, after they entered Canaan, spoke a language cognate with the languages of neighboring Semitic peoples, so they adopted the common alphabet. A reference to the early use of writing by the Israelites occurs in a narrative, drawn from an old source, of an incident in the period of the Judges, relating that a young man of Succoth wrote down the names of the princes and elders of the town, seventy-seven in number. From the mere ability to use writing

it is still a long step to literary composition. Not until the time of the monarchy was writing employed by the Israelites in any considerable measure. When the tribes then became a nation, they realized the value of state records and the significance of written history.

King David, after the old manner of other kings, instituted at his court the office of scribe and of recorder. The function of the scribe was the despatch of royal correspondence, the practice of which was extensive among the nations; and upon the scribe or upon the recorder devolved the preparation of the state annals. Modelled on the court documents of Egypt and Babylonia, these annals, begun by David and carried through the divided kingdoms, doubtless furnished the materials for the "Book of the Chronicles of Israel (or Judah)" frequently referred to in the Book of Kings. In themselves they were only a nucleus. The writing of history in the sense of sustained narrative was not attained until the reign of Solomon.

Some one, probably attached to the court, closely informed as to events, perhaps himself a witness of them or even a participant, wrote down the story of David as a man and as king.[1] Other hands added preliminary material. Still others took up the threads and wove their pattern of the times of Saul. As years lengthened into decades and these into centuries, writers working ever in reverse direction recounted the acts of the Judges, the incidents of the Conquest, the bondage in Egypt and the wilderness wanderings, the lives of the patriarchs, invention walking hand in hand with memory; until at last imagination, simple-hearted, dared to figure forth the very creation of the world.

The impulse which thus initiated the writing of history was itself a culmination. Literary composition continued thence increasingly

[1] This narrative is now comprised within 2 Sam. 9–20 and 1 K. 1 and 2. The author may have been the priest Abiathar or the priest Ahimaaz.

down the centuries. But turning backward, the skill of the earliest historians, contemporary with Solomon, implies a long discipline in the art of story-telling. The skill that was theirs was won for them by ages of vital inventive tradition. Israel had imagination, was quick to see and feel, loved life; aspiring toward divine things, it lost nothing of human values and excitements along the way. From the beginning, in every roving clan or village group, songs were sung and tales were told to celebrate heroic deeds or to rehearse some heightened incident of which their little corner of the countryside was once the scene. So the material whereof writers in maturer years wove their intricate web was a heritage of memory descended to them from the lusty youth and strong young manhood of Israel's tribal past. Within the conscious refinements of written narrative still beats the urgent pulse of poem and story close to the heart of the people and living on their lips.

The four great basic narratives have each its own distinctive substance and mode. In particular, however, with due allowance for their authors' literary art, the two older works, J and E, derive much of their special savor from the primal stuff of which they were composed. To taste that savor in its pristine freshness points the way to enjoyment of its ultimate fruition. By resolving the composite narratives into their elements, it becomes possible to see the early literature of Israel in the making, and to catch something of its immediate essential quality at the moment of its origin.

Among every people, the oldest form of memorable speech is song or poem. So it was with the Hebrew tribes. The occasion of the utterance might be of the utmost diversity. A chieftain boasts his prowess (Gen. 4 23–24). Cherished by a clan from generation to generation are verses signalizing its renown (Gen. 49 2–27; Deut. 33 6–25).

A common task is lightened by a chant, which has besides a note of magical invocation (Num. 21 17–18). In verse also are spoken divine oracles (Gen. 3 14–15, 16, 17–19; 16 11f.; 25 23; Ex. 17 14, 16; Num. 12 6–8; 23 7–10, 18–24; 24 3–9, 15–24; 1 Sam. 15 22–23): blessing and curse, whether of God or of men, are pronounced in rhythmic measure (Gen. 9 25–27; 27 27–29, 39–40). The successful issue of a battle is celebrated in a triumphal ode (Ex. 15 1; Ju. 5 2–31). Touching the lighter side, proverbial sayings pass current like coins, stamped with a recognizable impress (Num. 21 27; 1 Sam. 24 13). To riddles such as Samson posed (Ju. 14 14), their metrical form gives added zest. Jotham's mocking parable (Ju. 9 8–15) is but a single example of probably many trenchant poetic fables, which in pointing a moral, likewise pleased the fancy of the crowd. Grief finds voice no less than joy, and utters itself in the lament. The poetry of Israel reaches the heights in David's supreme elegy (2 Sam. 1 19–27). Herewith is by no means exhausted the variety of motive and theme.

Inspired by occasion, a poem leaps to utterance in response to immediate popular acclaim. The wellspring of early Hebrew verse may be imagined somewhat after this fashion. The clansmen are gathered before their tents, or the villagers in the broad place of the gate. Excitement sways the assembly. Under the stress, some one — a woman it may be, a Miriam or a Deborah, for women were poets no less than men, yielding nothing to them of inspiration and leadership — bounds forward to voice the emotion of the instant. It is an outburst of feeling, whose intensity compels a rhythm of speech and movement, perhaps but a single measured verse or two. The hearers, sharing the exaltation, participate in the action with accordant shout, with striking of hands or stamping of feet, and with imitative gesture, that may expand into a dance. So the poet can be conceived as speaking always in the presence of an audience; his verses are not

written for distant and unknown readers, but are pronounced in the hearing of the clan. With reason, therefore, many Hebrew poems take the form of address. Thus the braggart chieftain, himself typical of a clan boasting of its repute:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech.

Thus the workers delving in the desert sand:

Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it.

In fragments of tribal songs:

Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out;
And, Issachar, in thy tents.

In Deborah's triumphal ode:

Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto Yahweh.

So Miriam called,

Sing ye to Yahweh, for he hath triumphed gloriously;

And the women answered,

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Often the "poet" is not an individual, but rather the group itself; and the verses are chanted by the gathering as a chorus, shouting in unison or in antiphonal response. "It came to pass, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, tc meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women sang one to another in their play, and said, (one group)

Saul hath slain his thousands,

(and the answering chorus came)

And David his ten thousands."

Closely suiting the poet's attitude and motive, the form of Hebrew verse is eminently fitted to be the medium of ejaculation. Its metri-

cal character is determined by stress, with usually two or four, less often with three, accents to a line; the number of unaccented syllables between the beats remains free. A special order of verse-form, the *qina* or lament, observes a more rigid limitation; it has three stresses in the first line and two in the second:

Fallen no more to rise,
Virgin of Israel;
Hurled upon her land,
None to raise her!

The structure of the poem is based on a balancing, usually in pairs, of lines, and integral with them, of ideas. The single line is virtually complete in itself, the end of it coinciding with a pause in the sense; the second line is a counterpart of the first, restating the same idea with different words, or setting forth its contrast. The unit in Hebrew verse, therefore, is the couplet, which may overflow into three lines; longer poems consist in a building up of distinct units into a series.

Yahweh, when thou wentest forth out of Seïr,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled,
The heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
The mountains quaked at the presence of Yahweh,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

In the Hebrew, the rhetorical effect is heightened by assonance, or similarity of sound, and by paronomasia, or play upon the same sound with a difference of meaning, comparable to the pun, a play, however, which may be used with utmost seriousness to intensify the emotional appeal. A few instances of rhyme may be considered as accidental; for although the language, with its pronominal suffixes and the endings of verbs, easily lends itself to rhyme, the poets did not with deliberate intention avail themselves of the device. These

effects are necessarily lost in translation; but even lacking them, in translation the power and intensity of the verse prevail.

The qualities of this poetry as literature are conditioned in part by the resources of Hebrew speech. The vocabulary is concrete and vivid, not abstract and pale; a word is image rather than idea. As with a primitive language generally, so in Hebrew, the inherent metaphor is not yet faded with the lapse of time nor attenuated by ages of reflection. Adjectives are not many. The burden of meaning, with whatever modifications attach to it, is carried chiefly by nouns, which hold in themselves the objective image. The Hebrew forged no compound words; speech is wrought of single but figurative elements. Likewise the sentence structure, as compared with Greek or Latin, seems rudimentary. Syntactical relations are expressed with great simplicity. Nouns have but two case-forms, the "absolute" and the "construct." Verbs have only two tenses, the so-called "perfect" and "imperfect," which denote not the order of time but the kind of action, finished or unfinished, whether in the past, the present, or the future. These tenses, however, are capable of very delicate implications. Because particles and connectives are limited in number, so with a kind of impressive uniformity, as though keeping step rank upon rank, sentence follows sentence, all of the same mould and value: the normal order of words is verb, subject, and object, for the act itself, with its consequences, is regarded as more important than the agent; fashioned after this pattern, then, and owing to the want of different connectives, clauses are generally coördinate. Therefore sentences cannot be developed by complex modulations into long sustained or highly varied periods. The power of Hebrew style resides not in the subtleties of intricate rhythms nor fanciful embellishment, but in forthright emphasis and the primal imagery of words.

As the medium of literature, this language was well adapted to the Israelites' innate temperament. Their reaction to the world about them was immediate, acute, and practical. In the contacts of life, they were more swayed by vehemence of feeling than controlled by reflective thought. They had more of passion, as uttered in the bitter taunts and fierce exultation of Deborah's Song, than of recollected sentiment, of which David's Lament is almost the sole though fervidly moving example. Out of this instant, vivid reaction to excitements sprang the heightened speech which catches the beat of verse. So a poem was the issue, at the very moment itself, of direct experience rather than the product of free-ranging, timeless invention. Israelite poetry does not essay to create a world desired, a world of loveliness, of iridescent color, and transfiguring phantasies; rather it mirrors the world that is, but aglow with passion. Its effect is to be sought not in new reaches of emotion summoned from afar, but in its own kindling energy, its power with quickened pulses to raise habitual emotions to a new intensity.

So much of early Israelite poetry as has survived is but a kind of torso, which an active willing imagination must restore to its original completeness. Poems and bits of verse embedded in the present Hebrew narratives are not more than fifty. Doubtless a far larger number were current in their own age, either of local source and interest or carried by ballad-singers throughout the clans and the countryside. In the favoring conditions of union and peace under the monarchy, the nation was enabled to place another and greater value upon its literature. Impelled thereto as lovers of poetry or as antiquarians whose scholarship was a form of patriotism, learned men, possibly among them King Solomon himself, made collections of the songs and poems of their people. Two such anthologies are cited by name, with excerpts from each: they are the Book of the Wars of

Yahweh, Num. 21 14, and the Book of the Upright (or Valiant), Jos. 10 13, 2 Sam. 1 18. It is significant of the course of Israel's literary development that the oldest Hebrew books of which there is record were books of poems. From the former of these comes one fragment, obscure in meaning; from the latter are quoted a quatrain and a long poem of incomparable pathos and beauty. Precious as is the Lament over Saul and Jonathan, the references in the narratives to these two Books serve rather to imply how much has vanished irrevocably. The certain gain seems less than the probable loss. In the mere names of these lost treasuries, only fugitive echoes of the spirit of poetry once vitally creative now linger as faint traces of its passing.

From but a few examples of Israelite poetry, therefore, must be inferred its characteristic mode and special savor. Responding to the impulsive, abrupt temper of the people, most of the poems are strikingly brief. Until later centuries, by far the longest was the Song of Deborah. Some which seem to equal this were composed of short poems originally separate, as the Blessing of Jacob and the Blessing of Moses; or they were expanded in after ages, as the Song of Moses upon the deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 15). The Hebrews fashioned no epic, like the Babylonian story of Gilgamesh. The epic derives its inspiration and material from mythology, which presupposes a plurality of gods. Israel had no mythology of its own, not because it lacked the narrative imagination but because very early it conceived the deity as but one god. Its personifications of the objects and forces of nature were not lifted to the level of divinities. Mythology, besides, is the offspring of speculation, the eager questioning after the essence and causes of things. Israel was single-minded; its zeal for the one God consumed whatever it might have of intellectual curiosity.

The themes of Israelite poetry are not of epic magnitude; they are

close to the people in its customary ways, with such excitements as the daily round may offer. They touch few of the great, deep elements of universal human experience common to all races and every age; rather, they are of tribal or local import, of interest only to the Israelites themselves at the time. Typically the poem is brief, for the theme is quickly exhausted. It deals with a single moment realized as immediately present before the vision of singer and hearer; or the emotion which it utters, though all-possessing, is simple, primal, without admixture or subtle shades. In default of a sustained motive and owing to the limited scope of Hebrew sentences, the poem lacks interior construction; progress is succession rather than development. Though discursive, however, the style is not diffuse; on the contrary, it is so compact, so swiftly allusive, as often to be difficult of understanding. With this extreme compression and strongly accented, as if spoken in a loud voice, it attains the maximum of intensity. The poem is built up of complement and contrast, without intermediate gradations. Images drawn from direct observation are revealed by a lightning flash; sharp of edge, with inflexible finality, they stand shadowless, — and disappear.

> In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
> In the days of Jael, caravans ceased,
> And travellers walked through byways.
> Villages (?) ceased in Israel, they ceased.

The sweep is wide; stroke upon stroke, the single phrase summons multitudes:

> Tell of it, ye that ride on white asses,
> Ye that sit on rich carpets,
> Ye that walk by the way.
> Far from the noise of archers,
> In the places of drawing water,
> There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of Yahweh.

The narrative speeds headlong:

> They chose new gods;
> Then was war in the gates:
> Was there a shield or spear seen
> Among forty thousand in Israel?

In the rapid succession of images, often the transitions are sudden and violent, but with a tremendous effect of presentness and reality.

> The kings came and fought;
> Then fought the kings of Canaan,
> In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:
> They took no gain of money.
> From heaven fought the stars,
> From their courses they fought against Sisera.
> The river Kishon swept them away,
> That ancient river, the river Kishon.
> O my soul, march on with strength!
> Then did the horsehoofs stamp,
> By reason of the prancings, the prancings of their strong ones.

Of a different mood but similar manner is David's Elegy. The note of triumph, vindictiveness, and scorn of the battle ode here gives place to grief. Deborah incarnates the fierce spirit of the tribes. David, lamenting the great misfortune that has befallen the nation, voices also his own intimate personal loss. Here are the same brief, full-freighted ejaculations, the same tumultuous welling-up of image after image, the same pregnant allusiveness, the same finality, equally charged with single overwhelming emotion. The stunning force of the rugged triumph song yields here to pathos and beauty.

> Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
> How are the mighty fallen!
> . . . . . .
> Ye mountains of Gilboa,
> Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, neither fields of offerings:
> For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
> The shield of Saul, as of one not anointed.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet with delights,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
. . . . . .
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!

In Deborah's battle Song and David's Lament the poetic genius of early Israel attains its supreme expression. But the qualities they exemplify are in varying measure typical of all Hebrew poems. The Israelites were a music-loving folk; and their verse had its suitable rhythms and its own kind of sonorities. For its hearers, this poetry with its energetic beat and impetuous movement must have been exciting in the highest degree. To appreciate it fully, to receive the import of its themes and its emotional power, it is necessary to regard it from the Israelites' own point of view, to identify oneself imaginatively with them, and thus, as for oneself, to realize it as their life enhanced and intensified. For modern readers of it in translation, it offers the stimulus of vivid images bodying forth an elder world of a singularly gifted people, images often beautiful and always alight with the poet's passion.

Upon the overthrow of the state there followed in Hebrew poetry a change of motive and a development of the form. The poems of Israel sprang from daily life, from war, adventure, work and play, with

no consciousness of a special religious interest. The Song of Deborah celebrated the triumphant prowess of the tribal god, but in a spirit of thanksgiving common to all worshippers. David's Lament was merely human, with no appeal to Yahweh. After the nation perished, the poetry of Judaism, under the constraint of earthly hopes defeated, became explicitly religious, the utterance of profoundly meditated devotion. Herewith the form attained a larger compass and a greater variety of movement. The simple couplet flowered into complex paragraphs long sustained. Thus the old Song, ascribed in a variant version to Moses, consisted originally of but two lines:

> I will sing unto Yahweh, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
> The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

A later poet, taking the simple motive, expanded it with symphonic breadth. What before was mere succession here becomes anticipative design. The total structure is foreseen; the theme unfolds, the repeat within the pattern occurs with variations of phrase, and the theme returns upon itself with adroit inversion.

> Yahweh is a man of war:
> Yahweh is his name.
> Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea;
> And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.
> The deeps cover them:
> They went down into the depths like a stone.
> Thy right hand, O Yahweh, is glorious in power,
> Thy right hand, O Yahweh, dasheth in pieces the enemy.
> And in the greatness of thine excellency thou overthrowest them
> that rise up against thee:
> Thou sendest forth thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble.
> And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up,
> The floods stood upright as an heap;
> The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.
> The enemy said,
> I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil:
> My desire shall be satisfied upon them;

I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.
Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them:
They sank as lead in the mighty waters.
Who is like unto thee, O Yahweh, among the gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?

. . . . . .

Yahweh shall reign for ever and ever.

Of such majesty and eloquence the poetic achievement of early Israel was the promise.

A poem rose on the instant in response to occasion and limited as to form. More ample and sustained was the flow of story in free, spontaneous invention, and current in everyday speech. Its beginnings lay far back in the desert. Thence the Hebrew tribes brought their traditions with them into the richly storied land of Canaan, which proved fertile also of new growth. Remembered and retold, the cherished tales passed from generation to generation, receiving increase as they went; until at length the spoken word was fixed in writing, and oral tradition became legend to be read. Of this age-long process the great narratives of the Hebrew scriptures are the culmination.

Young imagination, ever awake, demands doing, and it fashions stories for the easy satisfaction of its simple needs. Often the little narratives are merely amusing, whether crackling with rude humor, tense with exciting crises, or more gently touched with romance. They may rehearse the acts of ancestral heroes or shadow forth the mysterious ways of gods who revealed themselves to men. Sometimes they have a deeper import, for in terms of incident and image they offer childlike answers to childlike questionings, Whence, How, Why? Here clothes itself in story whatever may stir of primitive urge to the search that maturer peoples come to know as philosophy

and science. By anticipation, likewise, narrative tradition serves in the stead of history. The popular tales may also be the vesture and concrete symbol of religious truth and teaching. In them the clan finds both entertainment and its sole means of information; they are the sum of knowledge which the people have thus far won. The themes, therefore, may be of the most varied substance, but their essence is always action. Each individual tribe or group devises its own stories. But all have many themes in common; and stories, once in being, travel from clan to clan, from place to place.

Of such vagrant and diverse material the historians of Israel in later ages wove their scriptures. In this large web, the early tales appear only as brief passages of color and movement; those alone have been caught up that could be fitted into the main design. Doubtless innumerable others lapsed into silence and oblivion. Skilful writers of after centuries, with accomplished literary art, transformed them in adapting them to their own high purposes. Yet in their present setting, something of their pristine freshness and charm abides.

Wherever men gathered was the scene of their telling, — about the camp-fires, in the places of drawing water, in the town gate, at social feasts, on the thronging pilgrimages to the great shrines. In the hearing of ardent listeners, the tales were told with extreme brevity and sharpness of contour. A few minutes sufficed; but what the story lacked in duration was redeemed by vivid action. With acute feeling for narrative values, the short span comprised a real plot-interest; as one or another outcome was possible, uncertain from the beginning, attention was held in suspense till the last word fell. Recited before their hearers with appropriate gesture and inflection, the stories took on a natural dramatic emphasis. Two persons, or at most three, were enough to carry the action. With typical breadth of portrayal, they showed who and what they were by what they did. Each

character was distinguished by a single dominant trait, heightened in each by contrast to the other.

Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.... And Jacob boiled pottage: and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint: and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint.... And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall the birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me first; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright.

This plain duality, working by contrast, is based in the same turn of mind that found expression in the balance of verse. In method, too, the tales were similar to the early poems, — swift movement, stroke upon stroke. Attention was centred on incident in quick succession.

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.... And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that Yahweh met him [Moses], and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me. So he let him alone.

The stories end, as they begin, abruptly. Tales like these spring from

the imagination of a passionately endowed people burning at its highest intensity. They are charged with a sense of portent, something fateful, inevitable. Even in stories in lighter vein, relating the tricks whereby a wily young shepherd outwits his older kinsman, or the subterfuge by which the pious ancestor in respect of his wife deceives the mighty Pharaoh to his own material advantage, even here the deity is felt to be present and influencing the action. Vital, pungent, concentrated, these tales, brief though they are, — and their compression constitutes a virtue, — preserve in its purest quality the flavor of soil and air of which they were grown.

In the sustained narratives of the Hebrew scriptures, the early stories are used as episodes in the larger pattern. They are linked together by adroit transitions with a continuity that reveals a masterly control of material and method. Before they reached their consummate form, however, they had travelled long and far. Not all were of Hebrew origin. There are tales that seem to be universal, passing from one people to another as though carried on the wind. Many of the stories taken over by Israel were Canaanite, especially those localized at the ancient shrines, like the story of Jacob at Beth-el; some were Babylonian, like the narratives of Creation, the Flood, the Tower of Babel; a few derive from Egypt, as in the Joseph legends. Gradually the tales were cast in the Hebrew mould, until at last, when wrought into the great composite narratives, they were stamped with the impress of Israel's own genius. Some of the oldest, drawn from foreign sources, resisted the process, and their primal substance is not quite transformed, still tinged with mythological color, and reflecting the mind of the people that fashioned them originally.

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of

God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. And Yahweh said, My spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be an hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim [giants] were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men which were of old, the men of renown.

Here the material is not wholly fused; the stamp of Yahweh imposed upon it does not quite obscure the basic metal. In the large, however, the contrast between the deeply religious import of the Hebrew narratives and the crass mythology of their foreign prototypes and parallels is a measure of Israel's spiritualizing power.

From the sweep of spontaneous, unceasing invention, some tales, more apt or more beloved, persisted through the centuries, carried only in remembrance. But this sufficed, for the memory of an unlettered folk is amazingly tenacious of cherished lore. Transmitted from father to son since time began, they were invested with the sanctity that attaches to long tradition. A wider currency was gained for them on the lips of wandering story-tellers, moving from village to village and joyously welcomed at the great popular feasts. As among the Arabs to-day, so in early Israel were professional reciters of poems and tales, who practised their craft with the conscience that suited the dignity of an ancient guild. Such were "they who speak in proverbs," to whose fidelity was attributed the poem concerning Heshbon (Num. 21 27), a single instance out of a large number possible. Told by these skilled narrators, subject to the approval or correction of expert listeners, the stories, thus polished by attrition, acquired a rounded finality of form, ready at hand for the cunning use of the masters in a more learned age.

Stories that had certain elements in common were readily com-

bined. In its present Hebrew shape, the legend of Babel, brief as it is, implicates three motives: Why do men speak different languages? Whence came the great mound in Babylon? How did the city get its name? Several clans might have variant versions of the same event, each clan ascribing the deed to its own ancestor or hero; so in the transition, while the essence of the action remained the same, the personages received a change of name. Some tales gathered about a towering figure; thus the multifarious Jacob, ancestor and consummate type, drew many to himself. Others drifted to certain places, Hebron and Beer-sheba in the south, Shechem and Beth-el in the north, prominent in the life of the people. There were kinds of stories that would be prized by one class or another in the community, as the priests or the prophets. By the force of mutual attraction, then, individual legends tended to come together into cycles. A final centre about which the several cycles in their turn might group themselves was achieved in the union of the tribes under the monarchy. Now selection would operate most completely, to the exclusion and ultimate loss of stories less relevant to Israel. By this time it is probable that many of the traditions, either singly or in cycles, were committed to writing by the class or locality immediately concerned with their preservation.

The Hebrew state became two kingdoms. The northern kingdom, shaken by constant turmoil at home and by foreign wars, provided nothing of the security or leisure favorable to the quiet labors of literature. In the south, Judah was more at ease. The unbroken succession of David's line, the reflected splendors of noontide days still glowing upon the throne, the remoteness of its territory from external foes, disposed the scholars of the little nation to patriotic retrospect. With freedom and collectedness of mind thus assured to them, they were prompted to survey their fugitive past even to its origins;

recovering its vagrant memorials, they essayed to preserve them enduringly. In Judah, therefore, was wrought the first great narrative relating the history of the people, the tribal and ancestral fortunes, and ranging adventurously back to the creation of the world.

Unravelled from the web of the Hebrew scriptures, this brightly colored strand is known conveniently as J. The symbol is also used to signify the author or authors who first produced the continuous narrative in its written form. Whether the author was an individual or a group, the narrative bears the impress of a distinctive personality. Its quality is unique; its story-telling art is supreme.

The great narrative of J extends from the second chapter of Genesis probably to the first two chapters of Kings. The Judahite history opens upon the earth barren of all vegetation. Out of the dust of the ground Yahweh fashions man; Yahweh plants a garden eastward in Eden and causes trees to grow; he forms of the dust every beast and bird; and at the last he makes woman. Then come the stories of the temptation and the fall, the drunkenness of Noah (the Flood is a later strand), the building of Babel. A list of the ancestors of mankind is followed by legends of the patriarchs, dealing with their individual adventures and their contacts with neighboring and related peoples. The narrative flows out into the broad reaches of Joseph's fortunes in Egypt; with the burial of his father Jacob, the closing chapter of Genesis marks only a momentary pause.

The Book of Exodus begins with the death of Joseph. Thereupon follow the stories of the oppression of the Israelites, who have greatly increased in numbers, Moses' experiences in the land of Midian and his return to Egypt, the plagues that Yahweh visits upon the oppressors, culminating in the death of the firstborn, which occasions the institution of the Passover; then the deliverance at the Red Sea, the journey through the wilderness guided by fire and cloud, leading

up to the decisive event at Mount Sinai, the giving of the Law. The Book of Numbers spans the wanderings of the Israelites before they entered Canaan. Here J relates the departure from the sacred mountain, with the Ark of Yahweh in the van, the provision of manna and quails, the sending of the spies into the southland, the revolt and punishment of Dathan and Abiram, the march to the regions east of Jordan, the conquest of Moab, and finally one strand of the story of Balaam, the Ammonite seer. The account of Yahweh's promise to Moses, about to die within sight of the promised land, which properly belongs here, has been carried over by a redactor to the end of Deuteronomy.

The Judahite narrative is continued in Joshua, but only in fragments. Here, moreover, it is so intertwined with E that it can hardly be separated. To J may be attributed a part of the story of Rahab, perhaps some details of the crossing of the Jordan and the capture of Ai, and the stratagem of the Gibeonites. The strand reappears in the first chapter of Judges, which is in fact parallel with Joshua, not its sequel; and toward the end of Judges, the narrative gathers to itself the tales about Micah and his sanctuary, the migration of the tribe of Dan, the outrage by the men of Gibeah and the consequent punishment of the Benjaminites. Between the first chapter of Judges and this group of tales, the stories of the several deliverers of Israel, — Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, together with the story of Abimelech, — which were probably taken up into the narrative of J, differ in nature from the material used in the preceding portions of the great work. They were heroic legends about real persons, except Samson, of the not too distant past. They were drawn originally from oral tradition: but when written down, they were nearer in time to the events they recount; and they have therefore a genuinely historical character. The same considerations hold true, to an even

greater extent, in the Book of Samuel. The kingship of Saul preceded the beginnings of historical record in Israel by hardly more than a generation; and the life of David was written by a contemporary. With the accession of Solomon to the throne, the Judahite narrative ends.

It was an inspiring theme which furnished incentive to so magnificent a task, — to trace the history of the Hebrew nation, beginning with the very creation of man and reaching a climax in the glories of the Davidic monarchy. In Judah, about a century after Solomon's reign, the narrative was brought to completion in its first great comprehensive form. Place and time favored the undertaking. Judah, rather than troubled Ephraim, was heir to David's kingdom. The usurper Athaliah had perished by the sword of avenging priests; and the young prince Joash, drawn from the shelter of the Temple precincts, was placed securely on his rightful throne. After agonizing years of war with the brother kingdom of the north, Judah was now at peace. In such circumstances, for enlightened patriots it was a labor of love to recall the fortunes and triumphs of their people, vouchsafed to them by Israel's God. These writers may well have belonged to the priestly circles. As the learned class, priests would have the knowledge requisite for the enterprise. The narrative shows the scholar's interest in origins, in the meaning of names, the history of places: it is concerned with the legends of holy sites and with traditions relating to the cultus, the customs and ceremonies of the national worship; and throughout it is profoundly animated by religious purpose.

Within the Judahite history are included very many of the superlative examples of Hebrew narrative. These best-loved stories are so familiar, that it is difficult to see them freshly in relation to their

original background and so to realize how greatly Israel wrought in its own time and way. They are unsurpassed in any age: in their own age they have no equal. Simple, concise, fluent, vivid, they are masterpieces of story-telling art. Their simplicity is not a lack of depth or import, but results from a long refinement. Shaped by eager popular imagination, they were compacted and intensified by centuries of transmission, until at last the master touched them with their eternally perfect form. The primal qualities of the early tales have passed into the written narratives, their spirited movement, dramatic force, succinct emphasis. The writers who collected the old traditions also knew how to develop these qualities to the fullest potency.

Fluent of action, the stories are distinguished by their skill in characterization. Although in primitive society the individual was merged in the group, the figures of Israelite literature are keenly individualized. In a measure they were representative of tribes or classes or single human traits, but they are not merely typical. Drawn with a few strokes, they are distinct, specific, alive by their own right. The great-souled Abraham, the querulous Sarah, the subtile, many-sided Jacob, worthy son of the resourceful, shrewd Rebekah, the talented Joseph favored by fortune, the imperious Pharaoh, the divinely gifted Moses, yet humanly distrustful of his own powers, and so through a thronging company of full-passioned men and women, even the serpent in the garden, all are convincingly actual. Supplementing the recital, the adroit use of brief but significant dialogue imparts dramatic presentness to action and character.

The stories in Genesis have the freshness and glamour of an elder world. Originally the inventive expression of a rude people, who had to win their way by fighting, whose God was a God of battles, the tales of Israel's earliest days, by some strange kind of metamor-

phosis, are suffused with idyllic charm. Not warlike exploits are their theme, but the pursuits of peace. Their heroes are shepherds and husbandmen. They tell of common, homely matters, of daybreak, of noontide heat, the cool of the evening, and childhood terrors of the night, of family and flocks, of barter, of gatherings at the well. The starveling fare of desert camp and of the long, errant search for water and pasturage, the dull toil upon the land, are transmuted into the glow of familiar communings with a genial God and the cheer of human intercourse in a friendly world. So life is idealized, as seen through the bright haze of dawn.

The material of Exodus and Numbers is less intimate, less plastic. The scene changes; the actors are subordinate to happenings beyond individual control. Here the adventures of simple persons give place to events, in which the whole people play a part. The outlines were already fixed by a larger sweep of circumstance; the content was less capable of imaginative projection, of warm embodiment in living forms. In Joshua and the second half of Judges, the narrative, though telling of stratagems and spoils, returns to its genre pictures drawn from the little life of every day. Rahab the harlot, the wild escapades of Samson, the luck of Micah with his private shrine, the Levite from the remote hill-country of Ephraim and the horrible fate of his concubine, — these tales mirror the world that Israel knew. In the first half of Judges and in Samuel, the substance differs, as the document comes closer to historical record; but style and manner preserve their characteristic power of fluent recital and vivid portraiture, their luminous clarity of action and image.

So masterly are these Judahite stories that their quality as narrative is not impaired by the didactic purpose to which they were moulded, a purpose both historical and religious. Prompted by their sense of national greatness, the writers sought to prove Israel's pre-

destined right to the possession of Canaan. To this end they marshalled the legends that had gathered of old time about heroic personages and hallowed places; but these incidents, the Hebrew historians imputed to their own ancestors. From their methods it resulted that many of the ancient traditions, in their present form, are capable of various interpretations. It is not easy to discern their original meaning or to disengage from its investing imagery the substantial element of fact. Yet whatever their primary significance or the import placed upon them by the historians, they retain their narrative fascination. The love of story for its own sake will not be denied; dramatic reality triumphs over the special intention it was designed to serve.

The historical purpose, however, is less dominant than the pervading conviction of God's instant presence that the tales are contrived to exemplify. The God whom the Judahite writers knew was the Yahweh of the old worship, though spiritualized by delicate literary tact and a finer conscience. Not too remote from the world that he has made, he moves in familiar converse with men. Trustingly yet with grave restraint, he is thus figured as a person; but he does not lack divine majesty, as witness his revelations of himself in lightnings and earthquake. In the handling of their varied matter, the narrators, working in an age before the prophets announced the moral nature of God in all its rigor and exaltation, are guided by an extraordinarily sensitive perception of right conduct. Primitive man stands in personal relation with his deity for help or harm; the motive of his religion is hope of favor or dread of evil to his physical welfare. This material relationship the Judahite writers transmuted into moral values. To a degree which peoples of greater cultural gifts never attained, Israel apprehended the grandeur and the graciousness of God, whose justice was throned on love. No nation contem-

porary with Israel was able to clothe its concept of the divine with such simple dignity and compelling reality.

About a century after the composition of the great Judahite history, a corresponding narrative was produced in the Ephraimite kingdom. During the reign of Jeroboam II (785–745), northern Israel attained prosperity and peace which it had not known since the division, nearly two hundred years before. As with Judah formerly, so now in Ephraim, circumstances favored a review of national fortunes in a spirit of piety and pride. The task of the writers was similar to that of the Judahite scholars. Drawing on the same expanse of Hebrew lore, — popular tales, heroic and sacred legends, — they set forth the story of the Israelite nation with special reference to the northern tribes. Whether the Ephraimite authors modelled their narrative on the Judahite or worked independently, is uncertain; but in general, beginning with Abraham (Gen. 15), the history runs a parallel course. When the two narratives were combined to form JE (650–600), the Judahite contributed a far greater amount than the Ephraimite, and it relates many events not represented by E; but the northern history in its turn also embodies some material not used by other narrators. When disengaged from the complex which the editors wove so skilfully, it has its own interest and charm.

Sprung from the same people, but separated in time and place, the two great narratives are similar in quality, yet with a difference. The sources were identical — the national traditions. But the conceptions impressed upon this common material meanwhile had changed. For within the century that lay between the two, Israel had ripened in feeling and progressed in thought, under the urge and inspiration of prophecy. Swiftly within this span, the physical vehemence of Elijah and Elisha, northern contemporaries of the Judahite his-

torians, was subtilized into the moral fire of Amos and the yearning tenderness of Hosea. So in literature, responsive to the changing temper, the simple clarity of the earlier narrative, alight with candid friendliness, gives place in the Ephraimite history to a more conscious sensibility. The spontaneous sympathy that moves the Judahites creatively and envelops their personages as with an atmosphere, is refined into pathos. At times, as in the Ephraimite account of the expulsion of Hagar (Gen. 21 8–20), contrasted with the Judahite parallel (Gen. 16), almost a theatric quality attaches to the representation, as though it were viewed through the intensifying medium of emotions willingly stirred. The Judahite manner is forthright, objective, actual, carrying its own appeal without implied comment. In the later history, the old frank humor is consumed by deliberate seriousness. The natural dignity without constraint with which the Judahites clothed the figures of long ago ranging in open spaces is raised to a formality of slower movement; ease and freedom yield to a soberer mood. The freshness of morning is clouded by the sombre meditations of a wiser day. The scene is hushed with solemnity. The personages, more sensitively endowed than in an earlier time, are invested with a grandeur reflected from the divine.

More solemn, more grandiose, than the Judahite, is the Ephraimite conception of deity. God no longer comes down to walk familiarly with men. Veiled in cloud and thick darkness, he speaks from heaven. He reveals himself in dreams and visions; or he sends his messenger to make known his will. Where the earlier history represents Yahweh as working by earthly means or agencies, the later ascribes all phenomena and effects to the immediate exercise of God's omnipotence. So the natural is transformed into the supernatural. What was before engagingly commonplace becomes here impressively marvellous. In the measure that God is exalted and remote, he is

less intimate and picturesque. It is with a kind of loss that the history mirrors the progress of Israel's thought. Its underlying conceptions are spiritualized at the cost of narrative appeal. More abstractly theological, less accordant with daily practical experience, they are not so close to the imagination and the heart. Where the Judahite stories dwell lovingly upon the ritual customs of the old popular worship, the building of altars, wonted sacrifice, home feasts, and national festivals, which image forth the color and movement of Israel's ways, the Ephraimite authors are concerned to show the course of divine revelation. Writing in an age when the zeal of Elijah still resounded, when the voice of Amos and the cry of Hosea were ringing with remonstrance and entreaty, the northern historians were inevitably quickened by prophetic doctrine. So Abraham and Moses are called prophets, as their highest title to distinction. So a finer ethical conscience is disclosed in more scrupulous standards of conduct. Thus the Ephraimite writers ignore or palliate the details of questionable dealing on the part of the ancestors, as with Abraham's deceit regarding his wife, who was also "his sister," or Jacob's treachery with Laban, which was not his free act but the effect of God's intervention. In respect of ethical and spiritual conceptions, therefore, the northern narrative marks an advance upon the Judahite. If the earlier narrative did not exist, the later would be felt to be incomparable. Between the two at their best, is little to choose. Both attain the heights of purest style. In its more conscious manner of representation, in emotional coloring, in its grasp of human motives and its concepts of God's will, the northern history exhibits a maturer art.

A consummate example of Ephraimite narration is the offering of Isaac, recounted only in this northern history.

And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abra-

ham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of God called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

A deeply serious religious purpose animates the story, for it is designed to show that the God of Israel requires not the sacrifice of the first-born of men, as do Israel's heathen neighbors. But withal, the story is very human, very intimate. It is a gently pressing tale,

yet with anxious fearsome moments of suspense happily resolved. Here are the vividness of concrete detail, the explicit statement, the repetitions of phrase, dear to childlike listeners. A story like this, so simple, so dramatic, so restrained in pathos, so humanly appealing, so reverent of the divine, is hardly surpassed.

Inspired by a purpose primarily and constrainingly religious, conceived too in patriotic zeal, the great Judahite and Ephraimite narratives were intended also to be historical. For God manifested his will in events. In the simple view of Israel, with little of philosophic curiosity, Yahweh revealed himself less prevailingly in the laws of nature, so far as these were apprehended, than in the world of human affairs, in the acts of individuals, the fortunes of tribes, the destinies of nations. Faithfully wrought, yet the historical value of the narratives must necessarily vary with the character of the sources employed. History in the strict sense begins only with immediate observation of events or direct knowledge of them derived from witnesses; the definition is complete when this knowledge is committed to writing. According as the record is close in time to the event is it likely to be trustworthy. In Israel, full historical record was not achieved until the reign of Solomon. Thence as the Hebrew narratives receded into the past, to that extent were they less and less able to attain historic fact. Authentic sources might well have been available for the accounts of David's young manhood, the Philistine wars, the founding of the monarchy by Saul. Some old and genuinely valuable material was embodied in the Book of Judges. Before that period lay only tradition.

Unique and incomparable in the whole range of historical narrative is the brilliantly executed story of King David and his family in the later part of his reign (2 Sam. 9–20 and 1 K. 1–2). Written prob-

ably by a witness of the events, it is the earliest as it is the sovereign example in Israel. The literatures of Egypt and Babylonia offer no parallel. It is equalled only centuries later by the Greeks. The supreme qualities of Hebrew historical writing, as they are exemplified in the oldest passages, are here manifested in their highest degree.

This biography compasses a wider sweep than any other single unit of narrative. Beginning with David's kindness to the crippled grandson of Saul, it recounts the king's private sin against Bathsheba and her husband, the wrong done by Prince Amnon to his sister, the reckless deeds of the handsome, wayward Absalom, his pretentious rebellion issuing in disaster and his pitiable death, the king's flight from Jerusalem and his return, the revolt of the Benjaminites, the attempt of Prince Adonijah to seize his aged father's throne, at last thwarted by the palace intrigue that established Solomon as king: then the tragedy, powerfully knotting the threads of fate, brings the leading personages to their violent end. Many scenes thus compose the drama; yet an extraordinary unity spans the whole. The several episodes are all attracted to the magnetic, compelling personality of David, which constitutes the dominant motive. In general, the Hebrew story-tellers were incapable of the long breath. The extensive scope and diversified interest of this narrative are the more remarkable.

Resolved into its episodes, the biography of David, like all early Hebrew narration at its best, is distinguished by compression of detail, seemingly a kind of frugality of statement that counts the weight of words and seeks to make the effort of their use tell for its fullest value. The salient fact stands in bold relief, without half-lights. Invention exhausts itself quickly, unable to embroider the themes with ramifying incident. So too the urge to expression lacks the impetus to flower into long periods of subtle involution. Instead of

variety is simple insistence, and emphasis is won by repetition of phrase. The style takes on a certain swaying movement: then the swing comes suddenly to rest. A single sentence sums up the action, brief, inclusive, final.

And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem; and he saw not the king's face. Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king; but he would not come to him: and he sent again a second time, but he would not come. Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it were better for me to be there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be iniquity in me, let him kill me. So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

Such details as the narrator can command are seen vividly and presented with instant picture-making power. Moreover, the tension of narrative statement finds release in frequent dialogue. The skill of the ancient story-tellers, reciting their tales with vocal stress and significant gesture before responsive listeners, here has passed to the writer. His history has the directness, the swift succession of thrilling incident, the visual imaging that impregnate the narrative with dramatic intensity.

Now David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man running alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near. And the watch-

man saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be Yahweh thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, even me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was. And the king said, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

And, behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, Tidings for my lord the king: for Yahweh hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

With perfect simplicity of style, with immediacy of sight and object, with tense excitement controlled, the story speeds, and issues in reticent, great-hearted pity. The inner and the outer gates, the porter, the watchman mounting by the roof of the gate to the city wall; the messenger descried afar off running alone and coming apace, who answered evasively; the second runner, the negro Cushite, following close after, who dared to speak the terrible truth to the king; the anxious father, bitterly wronged by his son, but still his father; the grief of a noble broken spirit, and the cry of infinite, self-forgetting tenderness: here is supreme realization.

With equal dramatic force, throughout the entire narrative, vividness of action is complemented by trenchant portrayal of character. A company of persons shrewdly drawn move in thronging alert review. The figure of David is masterly. His faults are dire; his weaknesses of excessive parental affection bring disaster; he yields to wills stronger than his own. Yet outtopping all in the greatness of his powers and nobility of soul, he compels admiration and love. A suitable foil to David and likewise on grand scale is the war-dog Joab, man of blood, unsparing of persons in his devotion to the state. The lesser figures of the drama have their characteristic distinction. The three princes, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, are sharply individualized. The outraged princess Tamar, garbed in woe; the faithful officer Uriah whose loyalty the king wantonly betrayed; the unscrupulous Jonadab; the plausible counsellor Ahithophel, who yet had the courage to hang himself; the resourceful and cunning Hushai; the blackguard Shimei; the aged husbandman Barzillai, piously bringing of his harvests to sustain the fugitive king; the crippled grandson of Saul and his servant Ziba; the wise woman of Tekoa; the prophet Nathan; the priests Abiathar and Zadok, and Zadok's son Ahimaaz: these are not all the actors who crowd the stirring scene. Here is the narrative manner of the old popular oral tales, but raised to its highest energy and vastly extended in scope. The vision of Israel was intensely concrete; in the quick apprehension of onlookers, a deed was the person doing it. So after the ancient fashion of recital, now in his turn the writer presents history, not as a sequence of complex effects, but as men in action. The personages of the elder tale, two or three at most, were compacted of imagination. Here they have become a multitude, drawn from life. These people actually *are*.

In the century between the memoirs of David's court and the

composition of the great Judahite history probably were written the narratives that make up the oldest strand midway in the Book of Samuel. These have many of the qualities that distinguish the biography. The stories of the youth David and of Saul equal it in charm, though they do not attain its brilliance and intricacy. Thence backward to Genesis, the material incorporated in the Judahite history kept much of the primitive form impressed upon it by the conditions of its origin and survival as oral tradition. In the sovereign biography of David, the earliest and the longest prose writing in Hebrew literature, the art of historical narrative reaches the heights.

The history of Solomon's reign and of the divided kingdoms is continued and completed in the Book of Kings. The main sources, it is assumed, were a Chronicle of Solomon's reign, state lists and annals, sanctuary records kept by priests, notably of the Temple at Jerusalem, Israelite narratives of Elijah and Elisha — relatively early, composed perhaps a generation or two after their time, — an Ephraimite history of the northern kingdom, a similar history of Judah, and possibly other Judahite documents. This material was worked over by many successive editors. The principal compiler, not long before the Exile, supplied the sharply definite frame into which it is compressed rigidly. Working in the spirit of the Deuteronomic teaching, he selected such facts as could be made to serve his didactic purpose, and he stamped the whole with a distinctive style. The political history of the two kingdoms emerges incidentally and in fragmentary recital; social and cultural conditions are only implied. The chief emphasis falls upon matters that concerned the fortunes of the national religion; the kings are distinguished by what they did, or failed to do, to forward the purer worship of Yahweh. Escaping the severe constraint of the compiler's scheme, however, are passages in the old wonderful manner. Resplendently the stories

of Elijah, of Ahab, Jezebel, and Jehu, of Hezekiah's fateful years, have the great qualities of narrative of which Israel was master.

The literary charm and creative power of the Israelite scriptures overpass their value as historical records, though that is considerable. As a comprehensive history of the Hebrew people, it is not surprising that they are sadly inadequate. Yet these narratives are virtually the only documents from which such a history can be constructed. Israel, alone of its contemporaries, left no inscriptions of historical importance. So far as the records of other nations reveal glimpses of this little people of the coastland, they tend to confirm the trustworthiness of Israel's own memorials. The Hebrew narratives comprise a large measure of historic truth, — subject to some general limitations. The writers, for the greater part of their material, depended on oral tradition and legend; the compilers employed documents of differing worth. Since their attitude was credulous rather than critical, they seem not to have been concerned to ascertain objective fact for its own sake. Profoundly persuaded of Israel's destiny ordained by Yahweh, they set themselves to illustrate it most effectively. The deeds of kings, the acts and words of prophets, the fortunes of peoples had significance only in their relation to the providence of Yahweh. In view of the influence of religion upon Israelite culture, the zeal of these writers is explicable, but it resulted in a loss. Truth to fact, even if they could have recovered it, was subordinated to the lessons which their material might be made to teach.

The development of their theme was based on a rough kind of sequence. "After these things it came to pass." Israel had no fixed date or era from which the historians might proceed in either direction. Therefore their survey lacked temporal perspective; the relation of events to one another was not determined with explicitness or

precision. In the Book of Kings, the principal compiler attempted to follow a system of chronology by means of synchronisms between the parallel reigns in Ephraim and Judah, but the accuracy of his calculations is far from satisfying. Moreover, the historical narratives of Israel leave many questions unanswered. Happenings of utmost political importance are recounted incompletely, with no regard for proportion; others must be inferred. Social conditions are but a shadowy background, across which the persons of the story, briefly seen, move in swift action. History in the strict sense cannot be required of the traditions that compose Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua; with a core of fact, they are capable of divers interpretations. In the narratives which span the period when authentic record was possible, namely, in Samuel, Kings, and perhaps some parts of Judges, are moments of brightest illumination; then obscurity or empty darkness. So the long current of historical continuity often loses itself under ground, and reappears in broken passages which mirror back the world of Israel in wavering images.

Despite the fragmentary character of Israel's narratives, the authors and notably the compilers had a kind of philosophy of history. They saw in men's lives individually and through generations the working of a principle. The forces governing the world they conceived to be the will of Yahweh. In the oldest documents this belief finds expression unconsciously. Quite simply and naturally Yahweh overrules the affairs of men. Here the marvellous, proper both to the primitive and to the sophisticated, does not figure. In the genuinely original passages, no trace of tendency modifies the facts, as the writer is able to report them; the old stories, told for their own interest, reflect serenely the innate piety of Israel. In later ages, directed by the powerful influence of Deuteronomy, simple belief became a doctrine, to which men's present lives and the facts of his-

tory must be made to conform. The didactic purpose of the compilers, to whom was due the apparent unity that binds the diverse elements of the narratives into a continuous whole, obscures the original historic import of their material; but in compensation, it serves to bring into higher relief the character of Israel's genius. The view of life expressed by the Deuteronomic writers was the unfoldment of that responsiveness to religious appeal which was the peculiar gift of the Hebrew people. Their conception of the divine developed progressively through the centuries. But from the beginning, as it was a controlling influence in their daily affairs, so it shaped their literature. Because of their predominant interest in religion, their history was a religious history, in substance and in form. Their historical narratives, substantially true to the determining facts of their national experiences, were preserved as sacred scriptures. These scriptures in their own age were unequalled for literary beauty. But inspiring them, the thought of God's presence with men, which moulded Israel's writings, lends them an elevation that distinguishes them from the literature of all other peoples.

Hebrew prose style attains another level in Deuteronomy. The Book of the Law, discovered in the Temple in 621, was later by a century than the Ephraimite history. Within this period, great events had violently affected the nation. The northern kingdom had been swept away before the conquering might of the Assyrians. Judah alone survived as the chosen people of Yahweh to cherish the traditions of the past and to carry forward the work appointed them. The theme of the Judahite and the Ephraimite histories, God's wondrous care of Israel, was taken up by the prophets, Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, who charged the message with larger consequences and impassioned it with heightened utterance. Yet deaf to

all warning and entreaty, the people had strayed from the right path, and for more than a generation, led by King Manasseh, they had abandoned themselves utterly to the worship of false gods. In order to recall the people to their true allegiance, it was not enough merely to formulate the Law anew. It was necessary also to smite the conscience and arouse the will. The Law, given by Moses, in so far as it had failed to compel loyalty, needed to be reënforced. A new code, therefore, but seeming still to bear the authority of Moses, was promulgated as the Book of the Law. Here statutes and ordinances are set forth in the form of direct address, supplemented by urgent petition. Statement expands into exhortation. The stark majesty of legal formula is made to burn with the fervor of prophetic eloquence.

In content the Book of Deuteronomy combines history and law; in form it is oratorical discourse. The review of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness and east of Jordan, attributed to Moses as the speaker, is based on the great Judahite and Ephraimite narratives. The code draws largely upon traditional law, at the same time that it propounds a radical innovation. But in temper and style the book differs markedly from the underlying documents. The elder stories were told with gentle simplicity and reticence of phrase; the ancient statutes were declared with specific brevity. In quite another spirit the authors of Deuteronomy set themselves to their task, and they employ another manner. They aim to state the Law in such terms as shall command the people's eager acquiescence. To this end, the mere statute is amplified into a plea; to this end also the facts of history serve for argument. Yahweh loved Israel, and chose it out of all peoples for his own possession. The deliverance from bondage in Egypt and the mercies vouchsafed in the wilderness testify to his love, which fails not, despite the people's ingratitude and faithless-

ness. Let Israel penitently return, and heed his Law. Again and again sounds the refrain: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day." The Book of the Law rests its deepest appeal on loving-kindness. Awakening the conscience, persuading the will, it also speaks to the heart.

The motive of the book determines its style. A code of law is announced as a prophetic message. Impelled by the necessity of exigent persuasion, more acutely conscious of an audience than were the earlier historians, the authors of Deuteronomy suffuse their discourse with vehement emotion. On the lips of these prophetic law-givers, the Hebrew sentence develops unsuspected resources. The limpid flow of the elder narrative, here gathering weight and momentum, rolls into billowing oratory. Rising with cumulative power, clause piled upon clause for the sheer joy of it, the sustained sweep of utterance, aglow with the fervency of passionate purpose, attains the highest energy of rhythm, breadth of eloquence, and fulness of sonority.

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it. Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that Yahweh he is God; there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he made thee to see his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he

loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt; to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day. Know therefore this day, and lay it to thine heart, that Yahweh he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. And thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the land, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee, for ever.

The influence of the Deuteronomic purpose and style upon the weaving of the Hebrew scriptures ranged far. Deuteronomy itself, of all the legal and historical books of early Israel, is most nearly of one piece. It was, moreover, the first book to be accepted as sacred. Its diction, deriving from both narrative and prophecy, strikingly distinguishes it from all preceding documents. A consummation of Hebrew eloquence, it is also an innovation and marks a beginning. Henceforward the writings of Israel bore in their origin as well as in their final adaptation a predominantly religious character. So too the potent stimulus of the Deuteronomic manner affected subsequent writers. Notably the import and the style of the Book of the Law served for a model to the compilers who edited Judges and Kings, but with a loss of primary inspiration. For in their manipulation of their documents, the editors were concerned rather with the formal application of its precepts than with the emotional and spiritual fervor enkindling their great exemplar. Active as was its influence upon its own and later generations, yet in the extent of Israel's scriptures from Genesis to Kings, of which it forms a part, the Book of Deuteronomy has no parallel. To the imagery and force of the early poems, to the charm of the old narratives, it adds a surgent majesty that

crowns it as the glory of Hebrew prose. In rhetorical power it is matched only by prophetic speech.

With the discourses of the prophets, Israel had initiated another order of literature, of a special quality and interest. Its significance may be best appreciated as it is viewed in relation to prophetic aims and achievements. The work of the prophets in its turn, however, receives its fullest illumination as it is viewed in its contrast to the Law.

XIV

JUSTICE AND LAW

Down the centuries, from timeless beginnings in the desert through the period of settlement in Canaan and the varied fortunes of the monarchy to the final overthrow of the state, Israel wrought for itself progressively its appropriate forms of social organization. At every moment of its history, Hebrew society was subject to the controls established by custom or enactment for its governance. The tribal group, the settled community, the nation under its kings, had each its system for the regulation of the common welfare and of individual conduct, — a system which served as law. The law that Israel recognized at any epoch was a measure of the kind and degree of culture that the people had then attained.

Among the tribes, the basic unity of society was the family. The power of the father over his household, over his wives, his sons and daughters, and his slaves, was absolute. An aggregate of families constituted a clan. Here the heads of houses were equal in relation to one another, but all accepted the rule of a chieftain or sheikh. In his turn the sheikh was advised by a council of leading clansmen, distinguished for their wealth, their personal qualities, or their wisdom. Though not necessarily old men, they were termed elders.

In this primitive society, the dispensing of justice was a simple matter. Ultimate reference was to tribal custom, so old that the memory of man ran not to the contrary, forever inexorable and coercive. Within the compass of all-inclusive custom, the decisions of the judge in individual cases furnished immediate precedent. The disputants submitted their cause to the judgment of sheikh or elder,

who decided the issue according to custom or precedent or his own sense of right. The judge himself, however, had no power to enforce his decree. Compulsion to obedience and execution of the judgment lay with the clan as a whole. Failure on the part of the condemned to fulfil the sentence was attended by such punishment as the clan by the pressure of public opinion and common action might impose, even to expulsion from clan membership, with its terrible consequences. Lacking the protection of his clan, the individual was exposed to the inevitable hostility of all other tribes. So the murderer Cain, driven forth, cried out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear . . . I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me."

When the Hebrew tribes entered Canaan to possess the land, they were no longer simple nomads of the unchanging desert. Upon their escape from bondage in Egypt, they had sojourned for some years in the southern wilderness. Here, so Israel's historians told, under the leadership of Moses the several tribes were brought together into a conscious unity; and they accepted Yahweh as their sole God. As their communal organization became more complex than the needs of lesser wandering clans required, so one judge no longer sufficed for the numerous people. Accordingly Moses chose out able men and made them rulers to judge the people at all seasons; the hard cases they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

The instance thus ascribed to the sojourn in the wilderness was typical of the judicial office in Israel. With the settlement in Canaan, the tribal elders were succeeded by the elders of the city or of the local village community. Under the monarchy, the king was the supreme judge, but accessible at all times to the humblest of his subjects. So the wise woman of Tekoa appeared before David to seek a

stay of the vengeance her clan were about to exact upon her guilty son; and the two harlots disputing possession of the infant, referred their quarrel to King Solomon for adjudication. So Prince Absalom, aiming to supplant his father David in the affections of the people, stood by the way of the gate. "And it was so, that, when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" Thus easy was it in principle that a complainant should obtain a hearing.

In cases of unusual difficulty which fell beyond the competence of the elder to decide, either by reference to custom and precedent, or on his own initiative, the matter was brought "before God." Here the priest was judge. Decision was obtained by recourse to the sacred lot, through the instrumentality of the *Ephod* and the *Urim* and *Thummim*. The frequent mention of these implements in the scriptures still leaves obscure the method of their manipulation. The priest also at the sanctuary, like the elder in the gate, as his wisdom and probity enabled, might render judgment, pronouncing sentence upon the criminal or awarding justice between man and man. Along with the precedents established by civil judges, there developed on the basis of individual decisions by the priests a mass of precepts, accepted as divinely given, which was termed the *Torah*, that is, "direction" or law. Though primarily concerned with ritual matters, the law enunciated by the priests was extended to civil cases as well. In a sense, too, civil law itself was divine law, for all the affairs of life lay under the immediate supreme governance of

Yahweh. More and more, it may be supposed, immemorial custom yielded its authority to the Torah, whose spokesmen and agents were the priests. It was natural therefore that their jurisdiction should win for itself increasing prestige. Whereas the civil judgeship was not strictly hereditary but was elective, the priesthood was a continuing body with its own persistent traditions and inherited lore, and it was constituted of the learned class. Hence it followed that in time the priests became the especial custodians of Israel's law.

During the later years of the Judahite monarchy, there was at Jerusalem a court composed of priests and civilians (Deut. 17 8 f.). And now, according to the prescript in the Book of the Law of Josiah's reign, the civil judges were elected by the people (Deut. 16 18). Though its powers are not specified, the court at Jerusalem probably supplemented rather than superseded the local judges of old time. That its exact functions are not indicated is not surprising, for in general the relations of the various judicial authorities to one another, the elders, the priests, the court at Jerusalem, the king, are nowhere defined.

Judicial procedure in Israel kept the open-air simplicity of its origins. The scene was animated, resounding, and colorful, with figures in plastic groupings. In the gate and marketplace of the city sat the elders in judgment. There in the presence of crowding onlookers, appeared plaintiff and defendant, the one standing at the right, the other in soiled garments at the left, to argue their cause, — it may be fancied with passionate voice and vehement gesture. The accuser stated his complaint; it lay with the accused to establish his innocence. For proof were required at least two witnesses. Hence the emphasis in both the written law and the prophets on the integrity of witnesses as well as of the judge. In the very oldest Hebrew code of law it is written: "Thou shalt not take up a false report: put

not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. . . . Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and the righteous slay thou not." (Ex. 23 1, 7.) If the witness testified falsely, then the same punishment was visited upon him that he had thought to bring upon the accused. Having heard the pleas and supporting testimony, and having made diligent inquisition, the judge rendered his decision, pronounced the sentence, and delivered the convicted man to his accuser to exact the penalty in a matter between man and man, or if it was a sentence of death, to the whole people, to whom fell the duty of executing the judgment. Death was inflicted usually by stoning. The hand of the witnesses should be the first upon the condemned, and afterward the hand of all the people. Among a quick-mettled folk like Israel, it may be inferred that the judges were much occupied. Because of the public manner of trial, award, and execution of the sentence, partaking of something akin to an amusement and a spectacle, doubtless the people were always keenly interested in the administration of law.

Controlled by custom, guided by precedent, the elders rendering their decisions in the open place of the gate, and equally the priests at the sanctuary, were Israel's first law-givers. The precedents, on which their judgments were based, or which in turn their judgments created, were transmitted orally from generation to generation. Not until Israel began to have a recorded literature in the early days of the monarchy was the case-law founded on these decisions codified in writing. The work of codification, throughout the land and over successive periods, was done probably by the priests. As the learned class, instructed in the art of writing, they were peculiarly fitted for the task; as themselves judges, equipped with all the knowledge of their calling, they had immediate access to the long accumulation of traditional law. From the codes thus cast in written form, at differ-

ent epochs and of varying import, were drawn the legal precepts, ritual, civil, and criminal, which were woven into the Hebrew scriptures.

In the transfiguring retrospect of later generations, Moses was priest and judge and legislator, in supreme manifestation. To him, as the foremost instance, was ascribed the promulgation of the entire Hebrew law. Every statute, every code, every book of legislation was endued with the unique sanction and authority of his mighty name. Great as was the achievement of Moses in the moulding of early Israel, yet just how much of the legislation that the narratives place at Sinai-Horeb may be properly attributed to him is not determined. Only a very small part is suited to the tribes sojourning in the wilderness before they entered Canaan to become tillers of the soil. Law in Israel, as among all nations, developed in response to the unfolding and changing needs of the people through the centuries.

Embedded in the Ephraimite narrative of the wilderness sojourn is a collection of laws (Ex. 20 23–23 19), which is the oldest code in Israel that has survived. This code is named in the reference to it in Exodus 24 7 the "Book of the Covenant." The collection is not all of a single cast. In form and in purpose, the ordinances fall within two principal categories, the "Judgments" and the "Words." The Judgments are instances of case-law in matters civil and criminal. Phrased according to a definite formula, — if a certain act be committed or a certain condition obtain, then so and so shall be the penalty — they are quite specific in their application. The Words, on the other hand, uttered as direct commands, concern for the most part ritual matters; a few have a moral bearing. "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh." "A sojourner shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him."

The Words number in detail over twenty. In the Judahite narrative in Exodus 34, is given a similar series, now numbering at least twelve, most of them closely parallel to the Ephraimite version. In their present narrative setting, they are referred to as "the ten words," written on two tables of stone. Hence it is reasonable to infer that originally they constituted a *decalogue:* law was promulgated in this form later in Israel, and possibly also by the Canaanites; cut on two tables of stone, set up at the sanctuary, each table engraved with five commands, corresponding perhaps to the five fingers of each hand, the precepts might thus be easily brought to remembrance. Just which commands originally made up the Ten Words it is now difficult if not impossible to determine. For convenience, however, the group of ritual precepts included in the Book of the Covenant may be termed the primitive decalogue.

Neither the Judahite nor the Ephraimite writer was the author of this ritual code; in its present shape it was derived from older originals. The primitive decalogue was written down, no doubt in variant formulas, probably as early as the reign of Solomon. That it was not declared unto Israel in the wilderness is evident from the fact that most of the commands presuppose Israel's way of life to be that of a people settled upon the soil. Two or three may be appropriate to the desert: "The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me; likewise shalt thou do with thy sheep." "Neither shall the fat of my feast remain all night until the morning." "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk." These may indeed go back to the Mosaic period or before. That on the other hand the code is genuinely old, belonging to Israel's early years in Canaan, is indicated by its import. Its prescriptions bear upon matters of ritual; and in the elder days, before the prophets preached their doctrines of moral values, the emphasis in religion was placed upon correct ceremonial. Yet

the repetition of its precepts in all the later codes and books of legislation proves the fundamental significance of this primitive decalogue. In a practical sense it served as the corner-stone of the whole vast structure of Hebrew ritual law.

Similarly the Judgments included in the Book of the Covenant, by a gradual process perhaps, and in divers elements at more than one sanctuary, had begun to be committed to writing by the time of Solomon. Ultimately they were combined with the Words, and then both together were incorporated in the Ephraimite narrative. In its present form, the Book of the Covenant, itself not an organic whole, is a compilation from old sources, which may in their own time have constituted independent codes, current self-sufficingly. Naturally both groups of ordinances, the Words and the Judgments, at the hands of editors underwent many changes, — omissions of original laws, additions by other compilers and redactors, and rearrangement or confusion of the traditional order. The laws set forth in the Judgments have reference to the social conditions of Israel in Canaan through the period prior to the establishment of the monarchy; and presumably they continued in force until they gave place to the legislation of Deuteronomy. They imply that the people dwell in houses and possess property in farming land. Israel, enjoined to just conduct toward the resident alien, is therefore already master of Canaan. There is as yet, however, no allusion to the work of the artisan or to trade. In general, upon the background of procedure is cast no shadow of the commanding judicial figure of a king.

The Book of the Covenant reveals something of the Israelites' manner of thought and life in the earlier days. Yahweh alone should be their God; but he might be worshipped at many altars throughout the countryside, though these must be of the simplest fashion, of earth or unhewn stone, as suited a single-hearted, primitive people,

uncontaminated by the frippery of Canaanite civilization. Like other gods, Yahweh demanded sacrifice and offerings and the tribute of great yearly feasts. In merely ritual matters, then, Yahweh was still but the god of a farmer folk, in themselves undistinguished from neighboring peoples by any spiritual elevation. But along the farther reaches of the code, appeal was made also to obligations of moral constraint, which found expression in the ordinances of the civil law.

The Judgments prescribe certain rules of conduct in the relations between man and man; in cases of misdemeanor or crime, they define the penalty. The code deals in the main with the treatment due to slaves; with crimes punishable by death, namely, murder, man-stealing, smiting or cursing a parent, the practice of sorcery, unnatural lust, and, if this is not a later interpolation, sacrifice to other gods than Yahweh; with injuries to persons; with damage to animals or caused by them; with theft; and with breach or negligence of trust. The penalties provided are based on the principle of retaliation; and of restitution where possible, either equal or severalfold, or of compensation. The spirit of the old desert law of blood-revenge still rules. "Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Instances of the working of this law occurred in the time of David. "So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle." And the woman of Tekoa reported to the king: "Thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and killed him. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thy handmaid, and they say, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew." In practice, however, responding to the

temper of a milder age, the fiercely vindictive exactions of olden time tended to yield to requital by compensation.

The bearing of the Judgments upon the rights of persons reflects the social concepts of the period. Only the master of a household had independent legal standing. The wife was absolutely subordinate to her husband; a daughter was the material possession of her father. The life of a slave was of far lesser value; injury to his person was regarded as damage to property. In general, the cases which the code had in view were the happenings of familiar everyday experience within the range of a farmer people. The logical development of laws in their reference to detail is manifestly incomplete. Even in its broadest scope, the code as a whole mirrors a simple society, wherein neighbor dwelt by neighbor in friendly intercourse, with no wide outlook upon a mature and turbulent world.

The Judgments recorded in the Book of the Covenant were not the creation of Israel alone nor peculiar to this one people. They had their parallels, yet with differences, in the prescripts of an imposing code older by a thousand years. Before the Hebrews entered Canaan, the westland had been for centuries pervaded by the ripe culture of Babylonia. The outstanding figure of Babylonian history was King Hammurabi, who reigned about 2100 B.C. As not the least of his achievements, he promulgated a code of legislation, cut in enduring stone, which in the measure of its relevance to local conditions must have served as the law of his far-flung empire. So the Canaanites, known to have submitted to Babylonian influence in other respects, may be assumed to have accepted also the dominance of Hammurabi's legislation. When the Israelites became masters of Canaan, they fell heir to the established culture. Laws regarding the incidents of settled life, the ownership of land, the practice of farming with its attendant liability to damage of cattle and crops,

had met the necessities of the Canaanites from an elder time; and Israel had but to adapt these laws to its own conditions. In comparison with the sovereign code which had left its impress on the westland, the Book of the Covenant is but a fragment, drawn from a peasant society. It suited the mature complexity of the vast Babylonian civilization that the imperial code should be far more comprehensive and advanced than the Israelites required for their own simple control. But to the extent of their needs, the debt to Babylonia, even if indirect, is unmistakable. The sentence forms in which are cast the laws of both codes are precisely similar; and more than half of the Judgments of the Book of the Covenant are closely analogous to Hammurabi's laws, though with variations in detail. From the penalties imposed it is evident that the legislation of the great commercial empire sets a much larger value upon property; the little farmer people held a higher regard for human life. Yet whatever their intermediate debt to Canaan and Babylonia, the Israelites finally moulded their law to their own spirit.

The code of Hammurabi comprised only civil and criminal legislation. It was characteristic of the genius of Israel that its earliest recorded laws should be already inspired by moral earnestness. The hard demands of justice for the regulation of society were mollified to pity. The stranger must not be oppressed; and Yahweh would hear the cry of the afflicted widow and fatherless child. Each seventh year, the land and the vineyard and the oliveyard should be left fallow, that the poor might eat of their fruits, and after the poor, then the beasts of the field. To an enemy, even, the Israelite should bring back the ox or the ass that had strayed; and he should release the too-heavy burden of an ass belonging to one that hated him. This is more than simple justice could require. And justice itself, indeed, must be kept pure. The witness must not testify falsely; the judge

must take no bribe, nor wrest the judgment due to the poor in his cause. The moral elevation to which the law thus seemed to aspire, rose out of Israel's conception of law as the direct expression of God's will. Between civil ordinances and ritual commands there was essentially no distinction; both were deeply based in religion. Man's obligation to God included within its reference every act of life. Justice and righteousness alike were obedience to Yahweh. So all law was regarded as divinely given. Upon the decisions of priest or elder brooded the august sanctity of the will of Yahweh, the judge supreme. As the people advanced in the knowledge of God with the lapse of centuries, they shaped their law progressively to conform to their expanding apprehension of his moral nature. The way to growth lay ever open. The code recorded in the Book of the Covenant marked only a beginning.

Toward the middle of the eighth century, Israel's thought about the nature of God and the obligations of human conduct received a new and powerful impetus. The contemporary reigns of Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom and of Azariah in Judah, which embraced more than a generation, were a time of surgent prosperity. Recovered from the exhaustions of protracted wars, the nation had swiftly grown rich. The favored classes added to their wealth by extortion and oppression; and they perverted justice to their own corrupt ends. The triumphant materialism of the age was reflected in its religious practices. To conciliate their God, the people abandoned themselves to the observance of elaborate ritual, to crowded sacrificial feasts and lavish abundance of offerings. Suddenly, a voice was raised in denunciation and warning. At Beth-el, a royal seat and ancient sanctuary, the shrine of a golden bull that imaged forth the presence of Yahweh to his worshippers, there appeared in the midst of the festal throng the

gaunt figure of a herdsman from the desolate Judean highlands, with a flaming message of doom and call to repentance. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. . . . But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a never-failing stream!" After Amos came Hosea and Micah and Isaiah, with their cumulative messages of the ethical supremacy of Yahweh, no longer satisfied with merely ceremonial homage, and of the moral accountability of men.

In response to the new teaching, the spiritual leaders of Israel promulgated a new brief code of law. Two versions of it are preserved in the scriptures. One is wrought into a later strand of the Ephraimite narrative (Ex. 20 1–17); the other inaugurates the book of legislation comprised in Deuteronomy (5 7–21). This code is known to-day and cherished as the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue. According to both the narratives in which the Decalogue is cited, the Words were communicated by Yahweh to Moses at the sacred mountain. But a scrutiny of the code reveals the period of its origin and the sources of its inspiration.

With sovereign simplicity and utter finality of phrase, the Decalogue formulates as divine commands what Israel had thus far won of spiritual knowledge and moral insight. An age-long struggling experience woven of aspiration, of repeated lapses and toilsome advance, preceded the coming of the great prophets. Theirs are the doctrines, and not the concepts of an earlier time, which the Ten Words declare imperatively. In the spirit of the prophetic teaching, the ritual prescripts of the primitive code, here reënforced by moral incentives, are transformed into the demands of a just but loving God. No longer a mere tribal deity, Yahweh now despises the people's feasts and rejects their sacrificial offerings; he requires of men to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with their God.

The Sabbath in the older time was a day of rest and refreshment of the body; now Israel is enjoined to observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. In the domain of conduct, the Judgments of the Book of the Covenant, applying to specific instances, here give place to abstract absolute commands of general validity. In the stead of a penalty for a son who curses or smites his parents, runs the stark imperative, "Honor thy father and thy mother." So likewise with other fundamentals of right action, summed up in the single unqualified "Thou shalt not." The details of case-law are sunk beneath the surface, as they serve but to support the overarching span reared upon them. Manifestly the rise from the specific concrete instance to the abstract general principle was a long progress.

It was some five centuries after Moses rendered judgment for the tribes sojourning in the wilderness that the Decalogue was promulgated as Israel's rule of life. Out of the vicissitudes of this long history the nation was moving toward the heights, guided by its great teachers. Moulded in the fervor of their zeal, the brief code uttered the loftiest concepts of religion and morality that Israel had so far achieved. The Ten Commandments, though distinguished, far beyond the law of other nations, for their spiritual and ethical nobility, had reference, as designed, only to Israel. But the medium which this people fashioned for its own uses was capable of a larger expressiveness, in the measure that a richer experience of God and his ways with men charged it with a wider import. Though the Decalogue was limited in scope, and the people which conceived it might still pass to fuller knowledge of the divine nature and purposes, yet by virtue of its supreme rightness, what Israel wrought out for itself was able to become universal.

Israel sinned against the light. The exalted teaching of the proph-

ets seemed to have proved only a counsel of perfection; and the people went their old unheeding licentious ways. King Hezekiah, indeed, responsive to prophetic doctrine, had attempted to purify the national worship. But his son Manasseh, during a reign of more than half a century, by his own example and active tolerance opened wide the gates to all manner of recreant practices. To stem the flood of the old popular license which swept back over the nation, to check the swift prevalence of idolatry and foreign cults, there remained to the partisans of Yahweh a means of counter-attack. The law given to Israel of ancient time had lapsed into general neglect; it was necessary, therefore, to promulgate the law anew, reënforced by more potent sanctions. The prophetic reformers, aided by priests still faithful to the pure worship of Yahweh, drafted the code which was "found" in the Temple in the eighteenth year of King Josiah and solemnly proclaimed by him as the law of the land.

The new code, preserved in the present book of Deuteronomy, aimed primarily at the reform of Israel's religion. Its purpose was to reinstate the true worship of Yahweh, at once retrieving its ancient purity and enduing it with enhanced majesty and power. Toward the fulfilment of this purpose it was necessary to formulate the law of Yahweh anew, with reference to the needs of the present. In order to make the law prevail, it was further necessary to invest the statement of it with supreme sanction and adequate compulsions. Hence the book was attributed to Moses, the first and greatest of Israel's law-givers, speaking in the name and on behalf of Yahweh himself. The observance of the law was enjoined by promise of reward and threat of punishment, supplemented by appeal to the enlightened conscience and humane sympathies of a people who should have profited by the teaching of its spiritual leaders. Though their purpose was primarily religious, the reformers based their program still

more broadly. In Israel's concept of the regulation of life, ritual law was not distinguished from civil law; both proceeded from the will of Yahweh. The drafting of the new code, therefore, found occasion for the restatement of ordinances governing the people in all relations.

The legislation of Deuteronomy, however, is not a systematic or comprehensive codex. Later than the Book of the Covenant by several centuries, it draws largely upon the older Judgments. Various minor collections, as the lack of order indicates, were probably also included; and the new code may have formulated certain legal usages hitherto unwritten. Some of the old decisions are repeated without change; but in general the ancient prescripts are modified to suit the later conditions.

Many laws were decreed as a necessary consequence of the exclusive sanctity bestowed by the new code upon the Temple at Jerusalem. In civil and criminal matters, the book deals with such diverse subjects as the year of release, the rights of slaves, the appointment of judges, the kingship, the law of prophets, divination and magic, asylum for the manslayer, landmarks, witnesses, military service and war, the treatment of female captives, strayed animals and lost property, adultery, seduction, and incest, divorce, the "levirate marriage," usury, pledges, just weights, and many details of apparently trifling importance, of which birds' nests and parapets upon house-roofs are typical examples. Indeed, the prescripts of civil law seem intended, less to constitute a complete and orderly codex, than to serve as illustrations of the underlying principles which the book is designed to inculcate. Though the legislation as a whole is fragmentary and unmethodical, it is distinguished throughout by its earnestness on behalf of the humane spirit which should animate the administration of law. Justice should be tempered by

mercy. And from regard of justice, because a just God required it, should spring right conduct toward one's fellow men. Already in the earlier codes, a sense of Yahweh's immediate presence and controlling power had guided the judges of the people; and their decisions reflected something of the gleam, which their eager searching was able to discern, of God's moral character. Day broadened with the centuries. Responsive to the teaching of the prophets, the legislation of Deuteronomy was profoundly expressive of Israel's genius in its religious passion and its enlightened, great-hearted appeal to love, divine and human.

The Book of the Law, given to the nation in Josiah's reign, proved to be of far-reaching significance. Itself the last and most important legislation of early Israel, embodying the results of a long development of legal praxis, it marked also the beginning of a new order in Hebrew life. After the overthrow of the northern kingdom and the dispersion of the ten tribes in remote regions of the Assyrian empire just a century before, only the little kingdom of Judah remained to carry forward the traditions and the future of Yahweh's people. Lessened numbers and diminished territory made practicable the centralization of worship at the one altar in Jerusalem, with the attendant regulation of the popular cultus. Moreover, it became possible to legislate for the whole nation uniformly. The code of law, formulated by prophets and priests, promulgated by the king, and addressed to all the people, was accepted by the whole nation as authoritative. The book was received as sacred in a new and special sense, which was developed intensively after the Exile by the Jewish community. From the motive and spirit which should animate justice, that Deuteronomy enjoined so passionately, Judaism passed to the cold meticulous observance of the literal detail of ceremonial law.

Great consequences, therefore, followed the promulgation of the code. The judgments rendered for the people by the priest at the local sanctuary or the elders in the gate were superseded by the single authority of a book. The freedom and flexibility of individual life throughout the land yielded to the rigid exactions of the written law. Within a century, upon the return of the exiles to Jerusalem, the scribe of Judaism succeeded the prophet in Israel as the people's guide.

XV

PRECURSORS OF PROPHECY

THE elders in the gate rendering justice, the priests at the sanctuary declaring God's will, alike gave counsel to the people in the weightier matters of their communal life. In questions of private concern which required solution beyond his own powers, the individual might resort to persons of another gift and calling. Like all peoples, Israel too had its wizards, soothsayers, seers, who by secret arts or special vision discerned things hidden from ordinary sense. So a youth of the hill-country of Ephraim, seeking his father's asses strayed afield, repaired to a seer, who told him the asses were already found, and announced besides strange great happenings in store for him. Thus it came to pass; and the youth was chosen to be Israel's first king. Years afterward, in the gathering darkness that presaged his tragic end, Saul inquired of a necromancer; and the wizard woman conjured up for him the departed spirit of the same seer who had foreshown the youth the honors that awaited him.

The instance of Saul's resort to seer and sorceress is typical of all the people throughout Israel's history. The humble and the great sought to force the mysteries of the present and to unveil the future by occult agencies. Authentic representative of Yahweh was the priest. Custodian of the shrine, he had in his keeping the instrument of the sacred lot; the oracles which he thereby declared were the *toroth*, or directions, of Yahweh. Of a different order were the seer and the gazer. These were indeed "men of God," but they had not the official status of the priest; their craft proceeded from themselves. The seer discovered the hidden, penetrated the remote, by his own

inner vision; he was "a *clairvoyant*, a private practitioner, who by occult means actually *saw* things at a distance, whether of time or space." [1] The gazer took note of objects and phenomena, as strangely charged with portent; and he divined their import, otherwise obscure, but disclosed to his recondite knowledge. There were dreamers too, who were believed to be inspired by Yahweh. Less reputable but much besought were numerous and varied kinds of magicians, — sorcerers, charmers, wizards, necromancers, regarded later by Israel's teachers as illicit. But they continued potent and seductive to the end.

So deeply rooted and widespread were the practices of magic arts that successive codes embodied laws aimed at their suppression. Thus the early Book of the Covenant: "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live" (Ex. 22 18). It is related that even King Saul put away the wizards and necromancers out of the land. And four centuries later the Book of the Law, promulgated in the reign of Josiah, ordained: "There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer." Instead of them, "Yahweh thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, from thy brethren; unto him shall ye hearken."

The prophet, such as these laws had in view, an Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, was the supremely significant figure in the life of Israel and peculiarly distinctive of its genius. Other peoples had their diviners, seers, priests, wise men, poets, speculative thinkers. To Israel alone were given heroic, great-souled, deep-hearted prophets, unparalleled in moral earnestness, whose mission it was to affirm the sublime char-

[1] W. R. Arnold: *Ephod and Ark*, p. 92.

acter of God and to declare his purpose with the world. Prophecy attained its highest reaches in the outstanding personalities of the eighth and seventh centuries. Though they towered above the mass, overshadowing priests and kings, these exemplars were themselves a culmination. The stirrings and strivings which they brought to fullest utterance and effect rose out of the beginnings of the nation.

When the Hebrew tribes, fighting little by little to gain a foothold in the land, were once sore pressed by the Canaanites, then Deborah, the prophetess, in the name of Yahweh rallied the scattered despairing clans again to war. Divinely inspired, her fervor rekindled the ancient daring of the tribesmen and impelled them to victory, the victory of Yahweh over his enemies.

A century later, the Israelites, defeated and broken, were withdrawing into their hills before the conquering Philistines. The Ark of God was taken, the glory was departed from Israel. Through the countryside roved bands of enthusiasts, whom the people knew as "prophets." These were quite other than the seers and the gazers, who plied their calling privately. The prophets, like the priests, were consecrated to the service of Yahweh; but their method of receiving and declaring the divine will was altogether different from manipulation of the sacred lot. Garbed in flowing mantles of skin or goat's-hair, with leathern girdles, and marked upon the forehead in sign of their devotion, stepping to the wild music of psaltery, timbrel, pipe, and harp, the ecstatics "prophesied" in divinely impassioned frenzy. Sometimes the onlookers, seized mightily by the spirit of Yahweh, prophesied with them. So Saul, and once three companies of his messengers, succumbed to the contagion. Their transports were extreme. Thus Saul prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. The burden of their prophesy-

ing is not stated. It may be assumed, however, that they were champions of Yahweh, ancestral God of battles, whose worship was threatened by the disasters that had overtaken the tribes in the Philistine wars. It was as partisans of the old worship and charged with a religious function that they dwelt together, these "sons of the prophets," in communities at a high place or sanctuary. As authentic agents of Yahweh's communication with his people they enjoyed equal credence with dreams and the priestly oracle in making known God's will (1 Sam. 28 6). In close relation with them was Samuel, seer and man of God, who had foreshown and anointed Israel's first king. The activities of the prophets, therefore, seem to have been both religious and patriotic, rousing a renewed faith in the power of Yahweh, militant God of Israel. Their incitements were an expression of the popular temper; and striking upon quick mettle, they had a ready response. These were crucial years in the fortunes of the tribes; and the influence of the prophets was doubtless considerable upon swift-moving events. Then they disappear from the history as abruptly as they emerged. Two centuries later, in the reign of Ahab, again at a moment of crisis for Israel, they stand forth once more to play an important part in the national life. Elusive figures, the early sons of the prophets were but obscure forerunners of greater men.

From these enthusiasts, with their frenzied incitements, of the old days, up to the lofty teachers of God's justice and love, the transition is not easy to trace. Divine intoxicates like the early ecstatics were not peculiar to Israel in its new home. An Egyptian narrative from about the period of Israel's conquest of Canaan, relates how an envoy, by name Wen-Amon, was sent from Egypt to Byblos, far northward in the coastland at the foot of Mt. Lebanon, to fetch cedarwood. Zakar-baal, prince of the city, would not receive him, but ordered him begone. But for nineteen days the envoy tarried. Then as

the prince was offering sacrifice, the deity seized one of his young men, so that he cried, "Bring up the god; bring the messenger who hath charge of him." The phenomenon of ecstasy seems to have been unknown in the ancient desert. It was probably widespread in Phœnicia, as witness the story of Wen-Amon and the prophets of the Tyrian Baal at a later time; and it was extended in Canaan. The Hebrews may well have taken the contagion from their neighbor-Canaanites; and it is significant that the ecstatic prophets in Israel appeared in the north, rather than in the south, which was peopled by the tribes who came more immediately from the desert. But Israel turned the gift of prophesying to the service of Yahweh. The calling grew in dignity; and in time the name prophet, *Nabi'*, displaced the elder designations, seer and gazer, employed of a man of God. The great prophets of after centuries had something of both seer and enthusiast, the while they were vastly more. The transformation of the ecstatic into the no less inspired but clear-thinking spokesman of a sublime God who demanded righteousness was characteristic of Israel's genius.

Of different fashion from the members of the guilds were imposing figures, divinely commissioned, who gave counsel, warning or rebuke, as occasion prompted, and feared not to command the king. They seem to appear first in the time of David; and thence they had many successors. They were called prophets, though they were not usually ecstatics; some were shrewd observers of affairs. They had the gift of seers, and were consulted for revelation of the future or decision as to a present course of action; they spoke in the name of Yahweh; and at times they were impassioned by moral fervor. The prophet Gad was also called David's seer. A marginal note by a later hand, interpolated in the narrative concerning Samuel, supplies the infor-

mation, "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer" (1 Sam. 9 9). Through the history of the kingdoms, the term prophet became more flexible and more inclusive. So that in the narratives in their later form, the man of God of whatever order, whether seer or ecstatic or adviser, attracted to himself the name of prophet.

The advice offered by these mentors as unqualified and decisive was not questioned. When David, captain of an outlaw band, had betaken himself to Moab, there came before him such a counsellor, quite without explanation in the narrative, as though comment were unnecessary. "And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the stronghold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. And David departed." The same prophet confronted David in the last years of his reign. The king had ordered a census of his people, and then repented his act. "And when David rose up in the morning, the word of Yahweh came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and speak unto David, Thus saith Yahweh." When the pestilence following was stayed, Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, "Go up, rear an altar unto Yahweh." And David went up according to the saying of Gad, as Yahweh commanded. It is evident, therefore, that the prophet was accepted as the authentic spokesman of Yahweh.

At this epoch, likewise, other prophets stirred significantly. So King David, according to a later version of the narrative, consulted with Nathan as to the building of a temple to house the Ark. Immediately Nathan encouraged the project. But it came to pass the same night that the word of Yahweh came to Nathan — in a "vision" (2 Sam. 7 17) — saying, "Go tell my servant David, Thus saith Yahweh," — to the effect that Yahweh withheld his approval.

Again Nathan, sent by Yahweh, rebuked David for his sin in the matter of Bathsheba and her husband; and then Nathan gave the name to the child whom Bathsheba bore to the king. In the palace intrigue which overthrew David's oldest surviving son Adonijah, heir presumptive to the throne, and set the son of Bathsheba in his place, Nathan was the dominant figure, in influence equal if not superior to Zadok the royal priest and Benaiah, commander of the king's bodyguard. Of the high functionaries in David's entourage, seemingly the most powerful in determining events was the prophet.

It was a prophet, Ahijah of Shiloh, who instigated Solomon's overseer of forced labor, Jeroboam, to rebel against Rehoboam and to found the northern kingdom of Israel. Ahijah met the king's officer in the way, and by the symbolic act of rending his cloak in twelve pieces, giving ten pieces to Jeroboam, the prophet announced the future rending of the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and the award of ten tribes to him. And it came to pass as Ahijah had spoken. To Ahijah, as once Saul resorted to Samuel the seer, came the wife of Jeroboam to inquire concerning the illness of her son; and she thought to reward him with a present of ten loaves and cakes and a cruse of honey. Disinterested prophet acting on behalf of Yahweh and professional seer were one. The Deuteronomic editors of the Book of Kings cite other instances. A prophet, Shemaiah, uttering the word of Yahweh, by his counsel to Rehoboam averted civil war between Judah and Israel. A generation later, Jehu son of Hanani audaciously censured the wickedness of the murderer and usurper Baasha, and foretold the doom of his house. In proclaiming their fateful message, the prophets seem not to have lacked personal courage.

Prophets such as these, spokesmen of Yahweh and jealous for his sovereignty, concerned for the welfare of the state, and active to rebuke or to command, probably were not wanting through the

troubled early years of the divided kingdoms, though no record of them has survived in the fragmentary scriptures compiled at a later age. The succession culminated in Elijah, greatest of them all in authority and power. Ahab was king of Israel. Having taken to wife the Sidonian princess Jezebel, he had reared in honor of her god, the Phœnician Baal, a temple at the capital, tended by appropriate priests; and a numerous company of the prophets of Baal enjoyed the royal patronage. Israel's fidelity to Yahweh was threatened by the allurements of a sensual foreign worship. Suddenly from the steppes beyond Jordan appeared a prophet, austere as the desert but aflame with zeal, to challenge the king's easy tolerance and to vindicate the sole majesty of Yahweh. Elijah summoned the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal to a trial of strength. Let them prove who is God, Baal or Yahweh! Their endlessly reiterated prayers, their frenzied leapings about the altar, their gashing of themselves with knives bloodily, all their prophesyings availed them nothing. Then Elijah called fire from heaven, which consumed the offering. And the assembled people fell on their faces and cried, Yahweh, he is God!

Yahweh's majesty was vindicated and Elijah justified as his true prophet. Now on behalf of the oppressed, as a champion of justice, Elijah again challenged and condemned the king. Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, adjoining the royal palace in Jezreel, that he might have it for a garden of herbs. Standing on his rights, the peasant refused to bargain away his patrimony. The answer was sufficient, so far as concerned the king. But his queen, the Sidonian Jezebel, in respect of a mere Israelite had no regard for person or property. By her contrivance, with Ahab's tacit assent, perverting the process of law, Naboth was put to death, and his vineyard passed to the king.

"And the word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel. . . . And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Yahweh, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Yahweh, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will utterly sweep thee away. . . . And of Jezebel also spake Yahweh, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel. . . . And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

Thus saith Yahweh! The word of Yahweh uttered by a prophet was absolute, final, crushing. And even so early in Israel, true worship and civic justice were one.

King Ahab had much to do with the prophets, some as seers, others enthusiast patriots, and a few men of sterner mould, rebuking wrong and announcing doom, these last as faint premonitory gleams forelighting greater men to come. And now appear, seemingly for the first time, the sycophant prophets, in attendance at the court. When Israel was at war with the Arameans, a prophet came near unto Ahab, predicting success in the battle, and advising the king in regard to the muster of his troops. The following year a man of God came near and again predicted success. Another time, a certain man of the sons of the prophets, wounded as though in battle and disguised by his headband drawn over his eyes to conceal the distinctive mark on his forehead, rebuked the king for releasing his enemy Benhadad; and when Ahab discerned that it was a prophet speaking, he went to his house heavy and displeased. When the war between Israel and the Arameans broke out anew, Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahab.

And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of Yahweh, to-day. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here besides a prophet of Yahweh, that we may inquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Yahweh, Micaiah the son of Imlah: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called a eunuch, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah. Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, in an open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith Yahweh, With these shalt thou push the Arameans, until they be consumed. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for Yahweh shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

The messenger sent to Micaiah tried to persuade him to declare, like the servile smooth prophets, good unto the king. But he answered, with the proud integrity of a true prophet, "As Yahweh liveth, what Yahweh saith unto me, that will I speak!" Brought into the royal presence, Micaiah at first repeated, ironically, the words of the company of prophets. When pressed for the truth, he announced that Yahweh had put a lying spirit in the mouth of the court prophets, and Yahweh had spoken evil concerning Ahab. Whereupon the king despatched Micaiah to prison. Ahab was slain in the battle; the word of Yahweh by his prophet Micaiah was fulfilled.

The narrative illuminates the status, methods, and influence of the prophets, illustrated further by the stories attaching to Elijah and

Elisha and other men of God. The prophets differed severally in mode; but under the comprehensive designation, *nebi'im*, they constituted a recognized class. Guilds of enthusiasts dwelt by sanctuaries, at Beth-el, Gilgal; they were found at Jericho and in the hill country of Ephraim. At court were companies of prophets, dependent on the king's bounty, who sought therefore to keep the royal favor by prophesying success. The guilds and the court sycophants comprised a numerous adherence. And individual prophets figured strikingly. Some were clairvoyant, were vouchsafed visions, were endowed with magical powers. A few spoke by direct inspiration. They might employ their talents on behalf of humble persons in the little interests of every day, rewarded for their services by gifts. Or they intervened decisively in affairs of state. At times, they might, like Zedekiah, like Isaiah and Jeremiah at a later day, reënforce their teaching by symbolic acts. As men of God, prophets were consulted regarding an enterprise of moment, for the issue was subject to the will of Yahweh; or they came forward of their own initiative to counsel and pronounce judgment. The prophets were fearless, devoted censors, or venal flatterers; they were held in awesome reverence, or treated with contempt; they were commanding personalities, the very voice of Yahweh in action, or they were mad fellows. Some declared truth, others prophesied falsely. All spoke in the name of Yahweh. Until the event proved them spurious, their utterances were accepted as authoritative. Familiar figures among the people, the prophets of the ninth century exercised a manifold influence in their own age. When Israel's greatest teachers came, they too were hailed as prophets. But they were prophets of another character and range.

The mantle of Elijah, holding a compulsion not wholly untouched

with magic, was bestowed upon his disciple Elisha, a person of a quite different stamp, more in the manner of the guild enthusiast. Elijah, sprung from the uncompromising desert, dominated by sheer force of personality; and zealous champion of the true religion, he affirmed past dispute the exclusive claim of Yahweh upon Israel's fidelity. Elisha, son of a prosperous husbandman and called from following the plough, was a clever man of affairs; with no message of moral or religious import, yet he aggrandized the repute of the prophetic order by his deeds.

The activities of Elisha extended through four reigns. In the war of Israel, Judah and Edom against Moab, he was the valued adviser of the kings. They "went down to him." But addressing the king of Israel he took, as suited the greatness of a prophet, a tone of independence stiffened with contempt. "As Yahweh of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel." For though sure of himself as he was, the arrogant man of God yet relied, like the old ecstatics, upon outer and mechanical stimulus to induce the prophetic frenzy. "And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of Yahweh came upon him. And he said, Thus saith Yahweh."

But this instance is only a detail in Elisha's prodigious services to the nation. When the Arameans were besieging Samaria, the prophet, against the weakness of the king himself, mightily encouraged the people to resistance; and his words were justified by the event. Another time Elisha journeyed to Damascus to anoint Hazael, in place of the dying monarch, to be king over the Arameans. Most significant for the history of Israel was the prophet's incitement of the rebel Jehu to overthrow the dynasty of Omri; making himself king, in process of the bloody business, Jehu rooted out the official

worship of the Phœnician Baal and restored the sovereignty of Yahweh: — with Elisha's approval and active concurrence. The legends that gathered about Elisha as a wonder-worker, and they are many, do not wholly obscure his historical importance in the prophetic succession.

XVI

THE GREAT PROPHETS

THE opening years of the eighth century, which witnessed the passing of Elisha, brought Jeroboam to the throne of the northern kingdom. During his long rule there is mention in the Book of Kings of but one prophet, Jonah son of Amittai, who foretold the good fortune of the nation in the reconquest of territory. But prophets of another kind and greater than Jonah or his predecessors distinguished Jeroboam's memorable reign. They seem to emerge abruptly, for they are unnoted in the historical narratives; they are suddenly and powerfully there. The paramount personages of their times, they are known to later generations by the books of public addresses that bear their names.

Amos and Hosea were the first of a new order of prophet, whose representatives were not many, yet who were the supreme embodiment of Israel's genius. The Judahite shepherd Amos, and Hosea, the high-born Israelite, prophesied in the northern kingdom shortly before its overthrow. They were followed in Judah by the statesman Isaiah and the peasant Micah. Then for more than half a century, while the nation went after strange gods in Manasseh's evil reign, was silence, save for nameless voices, echoed perhaps in the book attributed to Micah, chapters 6 1 to 7 6, pronouncing the doom of Yahweh upon Judah and Jerusalem. In the reign of Josiah, the labors of Jeremiah spanned the brief teaching of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, and continued after the downfall of the nation. Ezekiel, both priest and prophet, who wrote in Babylon after the first deportation from Jerusalem, belongs rather to Judaism than to

Israel. The historians of the nation, themselves adherents of prophetic circles, seem strangely unaware of their great countrymen. Only Isaiah appears in the Book of Kings; and Micah is cited in a narrative passage in the Book of Jeremiah. Of the rest, their own addresses, committed to writing, with addition of a few scanty biographical notices, are the only record. In view of the greatness of these men and the mystery surrounding them, the conjecture is alluring that there may have been still other prophets whose names and discourses have not survived.

The reign of Jeroboam was a period of prosperity such as the northern kingdom through nearly two convulsive centuries had never known. The borders of the land were pushed to their farthest limits. Peace followed. The fertile country yielded its abundance, trade sprang to life, and wealth came rapidly. The luxury that wealth makes possible flourished in abuse. A grateful folk brought lavish sacrifices to its gracious God. Yahweh was blessing his chosen favored people and the homeland. All must be well.

The thronging revelry of a great feast-day at Beth-el, royal residence and sanctuary, received a sudden violent check. A shepherd from the Judean highlands was speaking, an austere but vehement figure, — a prophet. *Thus saith Yahweh!* Seek not Beth-el.... Seek me, Yahweh, and ye shall live.... I hate, I despise your feasts, I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.... The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword!

Such dire words were contrary to all expectation and popular belief. It was the business of a prophet to announce good fortune, not

disaster. No people could be more religious than the Israelites fancied themselves to be. They questioned not the power of Yahweh and his willingness to protect his own. The greater the outpouring of sacrifices, they thought, the more Yahweh was pleased; and they trampled his courts in multitudes to offer their holocausts. The words of condemnation that Amos uttered in Yahweh's name were blasphemy. And of more immediate effect, his sentence of doom upon the king was treason.

Amaziah, high priest of Beth-el, was concerned to stop the seditious, impious fanatic. He sent report to the king. "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words." And to Amos, "O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there." Then answered Amos, "I was no prophet, neither was I one of the sons of the prophets; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore trees: and Yahweh took me from following the flock, and Yahweh said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel."

Prophets Israel had known for centuries, but not like this angry stranger who smote the assembled worshippers with lashings of denunciation and of doom. The early enthusiasts had roused the tribes to fight the wars of Yahweh. Under the monarchy moved individual men of God, to whom any one might resort for enlightenment or guidance. The companies of prophets stood in varied repute; for some of them were venal, willing to declare falsely, if so they might gain their patron's favor and reward. Such was the sneer in the high priest's authoritative tone, Get thee into Judah, and there prophesy for your living! Which Amos indignantly threw back, I am no fortune-teller, no hireling prophet of your brotherhoods.

Amos, therefore, and his fellows the great prophets, differed immeasurably in kind as in degree from their predecessors. Yet they

were linked with the past, for they availed themselves of the prophetic office, established from of old and worthily exercised in many generations according to need. Quite naturally they recognized the legitimate line of Yahweh's spokesmen, of which they were the consummate exemplars. So Amos: "I raised up of your sons for prophets." And Hosea: "I have also spoken unto the prophets." And Jeremiah: "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets." Between Elijah and Elisha, men of action, and the fervid terrific preachers of the two centuries following, there is a continuity, though in the fragmentary historical records the transition is lost. The great prophets turned to their own uses all that their forerunners had won. Employing the prophetic technique and taking advantage of the popular readiness to hear the word of Yahweh, they found the way prepared for them. Then with wider outlook, with deeper insight and higher spiritual vision, they proclaimed truths new to their own world and valid eternally.

Moreover these men differed from their predecessors in the purpose and the method of their revelation. The popular seers and the professional prophets, in the service of an individual, answered a specific question, usually in a favorable sense. For access to the secret of the issue, they depended upon physical means, as the observation of signs or ecstasy induced by music. The divine intention or probable event thus made known to them referred to a single instance. The great prophets on the contrary spoke from their immediate knowledge of God. Often they had a "vision," mystical perhaps but not occult, the symbolism of which they adapted to the practical interpretation of the fundamental facts of religion and human life. Impassioned, they were not ecstatics; possessed by the spirit of Yahweh, they were yet masters of reason. Working from

general truths, won not by supernatural foresight but by intuition, reflection, experience, they rested their case on logic and necessity; given certain conditions, certain consequences must result. Their thinking was not abstract, but immediately practical; their doctrine was not systematic, but stated always in relation to a concrete fact. Though addressed to an occasion, their teaching, based on absolute principles, was capable of universal extension. The true prophets, proclaiming to the whole people the nature of Yahweh and his demands in terms of conduct, were the embodied active conscience of the nation.

Called from his flock in the highlands of Judah, Amos was bidden by Yahweh to go and prophesy to the people of the northern kingdom. In his lonely watches on the barren hills, under the great sky of morning and evening and the frosty stars, the shepherd had seen visions. Some were but facts in nature, seen and pondered. Locusts that consumed the late herbage; a drought that devoured the springs under the earth and would have eaten up the land: these calamities were the work of Yahweh, who doeth all; but they were not irremediable. "It shall not be, saith Yahweh." The Lord also showed him, — perhaps a glimpse caught in a market-place and turned to symbolic account by his quick imagination, — a basket of summer fruit (*qayits*), ripe and gathered as the year neared its end; then said Yahweh, "The end (*qets*) is come upon my people Israel." Again the Lord appeared to him, — as he had seen a builder, or it might have been a waking dream of meditation, — standing beside a wall, holding a plumbline in his hand. Then said the Lord, "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more."

Yahweh is an exact workman, a God of perfect justice. He may

forgive and stay his hand once, twice; but at the last he requires the penalty inexorably. Tested by the divine plumbline of righteousness, Israel is hopelessly out of true, and shall be swept away.

Amos was an observer and a thinker. Though humbly reared in the solitudes of the Judean wastes, he was versed in the history of his people; he showed besides a familiarity with conditions in northern Israel, and a wide knowledge of other nations, from Egypt and Ethiopia to the Arameans of Damascus; beyond, he discerned, unnamed, the coming of the Assyrians. A prophet impelled to his mission by the spirit of Yahweh, yet he applied a relentless logic. Measuring actuality as he saw it in Israel by the standard of Yahweh's absolute righteousness, he announced the judgments that must follow of necessity.

The sins of the nation are many and heinous, especially of the dominant class, the powerful officials and the rich. Men think themselves religious, yet even at the very altar they lie down on the clothes extorted from a debtor, and in the house of their God they drink the wine that has been exacted as a fine. Debtors are sold into slavery for a trifling default. Unchastity is general. Luxury, so contrary to the temper of the old days, is gained by oppression. The women are equally iniquitous; they crush the needy, and they bid their husbands to cater to their debauchery. Judges are corrupt, merchants are dishonest. Everywhere greed, robbery, violence, at the cost of the poor.

The guilt of the nation remains guilt, though the sinners themselves are ignorant of their offending. "Are we not seeking Yahweh?" Yes, you consult oracles for your own private selfish wicked ends. But seek ye Yahweh in a higher and spiritual sense. "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and *so!* Yahweh, the God of hosts, shall be with you, *as ye say!*" Men fondly think to make their peace with God by the excessive zeal of their religiousness. With caustic

irony Amos shrivels their pretence and folly. "Come to Beth-el, and — *transgress!* to Gilgal, and — multiply transgression!" They cannot atone for their guilt by whatever lavishness of sacrifice. Yahweh despises their clamorous feasts, he will not accept their profuse offerings. Instead of oblation he requires justice; he demands not ritual but righteousness.

Amos applies his absolute standard of Yahweh's righteousness in its farthest consequences. No longer pardon but punishment is Israel's portion, for the people have not met the test. "I will not again pass by them any more." At last God's perfect justice exacts the merited penalty. Very gracious had Yahweh been to his people in the past: he brought them up out of Egypt and led them forty years in the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorite, whom he destroyed before them. He gave them prophets, to teach them his ways. But they silenced the prophets, they would not heed. And now they hate reproof and abhor him that speaks uprightly; he that is prudent must keep silence: for it is an evil time. Rejecting Yahweh's loving-kindness, the people have made his discipline also of no effect. Though he visited them with calamities, with famine, drought, blight, pestilence, disastrous wars, and the destruction of their cities, yet they returned not unto Yahweh. But now the greater Israel's privilege and opportunity, the greater shall be the punishment. The prophet's irresistible logic culminates in the overwhelming terrible sentence: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; *therefore* I will visit upon you all your iniquities."

The several addresses contained in the Book of Amos were evidently delivered on different occasions, for the prophet brings his indictment against the people in varying forms. So too he threatens them with divers punishments. To chastise Israel for its transgressions, Yahweh will destroy the altars of Beth-el, and smite the proud

houses filled with the spoils of violence and robbery. With scathing mockery the Tekoan herdsman confronts the haughty notables of Israel, "As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs or the piece of an ear — as Amos well knows by experience — so shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria in the corner of a couch, and on the silken cushions of a bed." The land shall be ravaged and the nation go into captivity beyond Damascus. Have the people trusted in Yahweh? Blindly. The sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste.

> I will turn your feasts into mourning,
> And all your songs into lamentation;
> And I will bring sackcloth upon all loins,
> And baldness upon every head;
> And I will make it as the mourning for an only son,
> And the end thereof as a bitter day.

Master of a noble and trenchant style, Amos commands the resources of an accomplished rhetorician. His power of close reasoning enables him to frame an irrefutable argument. Yahweh, the all-righteous God, must punish all unrighteousness; Israel is unrighteous: therefore Yahweh will punish Israel. The syllogism is unassailable. No apparent merits of worship and sacrifice can prevail against Israel's essential sins of injustice to avert the inevitable penalty. In the address that opens his book, Amos manœuvres his auditors into a position that well suits his purpose. Yahweh will punish other nations — all of them at one time or another enemies of Israel — for their wickedness; and his hearers acquiesce delightedly. With precisely the same formula, before they are aware of the consequences of the agreement which they accord the speaker as he proceeds, "Thus saith Yahweh, For three transgressions of *Israel*, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." There is no escape from the conclusion; the people stand condemned of them-

selves. Often the prophet may force his auditors to convict themselves by a sudden adroit shift from a commonplace, which they readily acknowledge, to its reverse. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Yahweh, that I will send a famine in the land." Yes, that may well be, say the people. *But*, continues the prophet, "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of Yahweh." And again, "Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahweh! — a day of triumph — Wherefore would ye have the day of Yahweh? It is darkness, and not light." With mordant humor the speaker adds, "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him." Amos uses the rhetorical question with immense effect, compelling his hearers to the answer he wishes to bring home to them, and leaving them to infer the necessary consequences. "Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" No: — and therefore they are not the primary requirement of religion. This developed form of oratory presupposes on the part of the audience a quick intelligence, which Israel possessed. The style of Amos is distinguished by its concreteness, the vivid image instead of an abstract general principle.

> Shall horses run upon the rock?
> Will one plough there with oxen?
> That ye have turned justice into gall,
> And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.

Dramatically he pronounces upon the nation a dirge, cast in the *qina* rhythm, the technical form of the lamentation.

> Fallen no more to rise,
> Virgin of Israel;
> Hurled upon her land,
> None to raise her!

In his fiery earnestness to convince Israel of its sins, the prophet takes the tone less of pleading than of invective and scorn.

Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan,
That are in the mountain of Samaria
Which oppress the poor,
Which crush the needy,
Which say unto their lords,
Bring, and let us drink.
The Lord Yahweh hath sworn by his holiness,
Lo, the days shall come upon you,
That they shall take you away with hooks,
And your residue with fish-hooks.

Endowed with the richest literary gifts, Amos is yet an uncompromising realist, without sentiment; sternly ethical, he is less a poet than a preacher.

A contemporary of Amos, though presumably younger, Hosea, born an Israelite, addressed his own people of the northern kingdom. Deeply learned in the national history, he showed also an intimate acquaintance with present affairs, as of one actively concerned in them. The call to prophesy came to Hosea not in a vision but as an actual experience. His wife, whom he loved ardently, proved unfaithful; the children she bore were not his own. In the sequel it becomes evident that Hosea parted from his wife, and that she fell into extreme degradation; for the narrative continues that he was impelled to buy her back at the price of a slave, though she was to be cut off from all intercourse, even with her husband.

In his own personal experience the prophet saw the symbol of Yahweh's experience with Israel. The people of Yahweh's choice, as it were his spouse, whom he loved ardently, had gone a-whoring after other gods. In their infatuation they supposed it was the baals who had given them their hire, — their bread and their water, their wool

and their flax, their oil and their drink. Not so. Yahweh is Israel's true husband; and for punishment of her infidelity, he will withhold the bounty that is Yahweh's only. He will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons and her sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies. As the redeemed wife of the prophet must yet live in separation, so Israel "shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim," — bereft of the very foundations of its political and religious life.

This first prophecy fell in the still prosperous years of King Jeroboam. Here the popular false worship, which Amos had condemned as misdirected zeal, Hosea attacks as outright apostasy. It is positive unfaithfulness to Yahweh. In succeeding addresses the prophet returns again and again to this theme, with which is interwoven his vehement yet wistful censure of other abuses that resulted from Israel's primary infidelity.

Within little more than twenty years after the death of Jeroboam, the northern kingdom was swept to its violent end. Six kings, four of them assassins and usurpers, mounted the precarious throne. Anarchy or at best misrule, a fickle and futile reliance upon blundering diplomacy, perfidious priests and teachers who taught falsely, utter rottenness throughout the mass, called desperately for the rebuke of a prophet and the chastisement of God.

As a patriot who sees his nation plunging to ruin, as a sensitive illumined spirit wounded to the innermost, Hosea cries out to his erring countrymen their need of knowledge and repentance. His addresses, as befitted the chaos of the times, and the conflict of emotion in his own nature, are impulsive, abrupt, incoherent; lacking structure and logical progress, his book is less an argument than a solicitous appeal, the more persuasive that pleading triumphs

over denunciation; the prophet's tenderness is greater than his wrath.

The burden of Hosea's teaching is uttered in the entreaty, "O Israel, return unto Yahweh thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity!" Yahweh is a God of love. From the beginning, the nation's history is the witness to his gracious kindness. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. I taught Ephraim to walk; but they knew not that I healed them." Because Yahweh has chosen them for his own, he requires their loyal love and obedience in return. But bent on backsliding, they transgress the covenant. The all-inclusive sin, therefore, is infidelity. True to the sustained metaphor of the relation between Yahweh and Israel as a marriage, Hosea denominates this infidelity as whoredom; and indeed unchastity, both literal and figurative, bulks large in the prophet's indictment. Faithlessness prevails in religion, in politics, in conduct. There is no truth nor goodness nor knowledge of God. This charge the prophet reiterates in his several discourses with a wealth of specific detail.

God's chastisements must certainly follow. The land shall mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish. Samaria shall become desolate. The Assyrian shall be their king. "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations."

It is characteristic of Hosea that the prophet's anger and reproach yield to grief and pity. However scathing his denunciation of Israel's manifold iniquities, he recognizes that his countrymen have fallen into sin because they do not rightly *know* Yahweh. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." How many times he would bring home to misguided foolish Ephraim the saving truth, "I desire goodness and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more

than burnt offerings." With infinite pathos Yahweh beseeches his wayward son: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? When I would heal Israel, then is the iniquity of Ephraim uncovered.... Though I have taught and strengthened their arms, yet do they devise mischief against me." So closely is the prophet himself identified with God's message that he is transported by yearning and despair. "The prophet is a fool, the man that hath the spirit is mad, for the abundance of thine iniquity." He is overwhelmed by the hindrances cast about his mission by the people's obduracy. "As for the prophet, a fowler's snare is in all his ways, and enmity in the house of his God." But Yahweh's love is patient and persistent, though Israel seems hopelessly estranged. With anguished pleading irresistible in tender compulsion, Yahweh cries,

> How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?
> How shall I cast thee off, Israel?
> My heart is turned within me,
> My compassions are kindled together.
> I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger,
> I will not return to destroy Ephraim:
> For I am God, and not man;
> The Holy One in the midst of thee;
> And I will not come in wrath.

Nor does the prophet leave his people without constructive counsel. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to mercy. Turn thou to thy God; keep mercy and justice; and wait on thy God continually."

The discourses of Hosea reveal intimately this prophet's temper, in many ways so typically Israelite. He is acutely sensitive, quick and variable, and yet tenacious. He is swayed by conflicting emotions, immediately in contrast to each other: gentleness alternates with severity; bitter scorn is succeeded by entreaty. Dominated by his feelings, his mind grasps principles in terms of things, actual,

warm, vibrant. Thus the prevailing obscurity of his turbulent style is lighted by vivid homely metaphors. "Ephraim is a cake not turned." "A silly dove, without understanding, — I will spread my net upon them." "They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." "They shall be as the morning cloud, and as the dew that passeth early away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind, and as the smoke out of a chimney." His whole teaching is urgently personal. Out of his own private experience he came to see that God's relation to Israel is a vitally personal relation; and to complete the circle, he figures the nation as a person, an individual. Mobile as is his imagination, he is yet steadfast and tireless of purpose. Against ignorance, folly, and wilful sin, in spite of active enmity, he holds to his course, though not without flinching. As with many another of his race, his passionate conviction of God triumphs over all obstacles. His career brilliantly exemplifies the prophetic mission.

From the complexity of Hosea's book, a difficult and injured text, his allusiveness, his recondite historical references, there emerge a few clear themes of his doctrine. They show him, whatever his ardor for right conduct, to have been a teacher of religion in its ultimate reality. Whereas Amos is intellectual in his understanding of the divine nature, Hosea has immediate experience of a personal God. The relationship between God and man is not physical and mechanical, as other nations conceived it and as the majority in Israel believed, but both moral and spiritual, demanding not only right conduct but a right heart. The truths apprehended by Hosea pointed the way to the highest reaches of Israel's religion.

Some ten years after Hosea's voice fell silent, the northern kingdom was overthrown. The future of the Hebrew nation passed to

the sole keeping of Judah. Here, as in Israel, spokesmen of Yahweh were denouncing the people's sins and proclaiming doom. For nearly forty years, until the Assyrians mysteriously withdrew from the siege of Jerusalem in 701, Isaiah was the dominant figure in the capital, indeed the most accomplished, versatile, powerful, and profound of all the prophets. Within this period, probably in the last decade, during the reign of Hezekiah, another prophet, not of the city but of the Judean lowland, uttered his brief crashing oracles.[1]

Micah was a villager of the region bordering on Philistine territory, along the secular pathway of invading armies. Aware of the menace of Assyria's onward march, he was yet more pointedly conscious of the perils that threatened Judah from within. All about him he saw evidences of the misery which the oppressive greed of his nation's rulers brought upon the humble. It lay in the power of their hand to seize fields and houses, and thus to deprive the small landowner of his dearest possession, his little plot of ground, heritage of his fathers. The tenacity of Naboth was representative of his like in all generations. In thus amassing great estates to provide themselves the means for their dissolute extravagance at the capital, these absentee landlords cared not that they cast out toiling women from their houses, which to them were pleasant, and bereaved young children of their home. So shameless was their ravening, they stripped the very garments from unoffending peasants. The prophet's invective rises to a cry of delirious ferocity.

> Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob,
> And rulers of the house of Israel:
> Is it not for you to know justice?
> Ye who hate the good, and love the evil;
> Who eat the flesh of my people,

[1] Only the first three chapters of his book, not including 1 7 and 2 12, 13, are genuinely of Micah

> And flay their skin from off them,
> And break their bones, and chop them in pieces.

In general, the crimes that Micah charges against the rulers were the prevailing flagrant iniquities of the time, similarly condemned by his predecessors in Israel and by his great contemporary in Judah; and he is at one with them in his threatenings of ruin, desolation, and captivity. Especially however, this villager, champion of his fellow yeomen, execrates the wickedness of cities. With the conservatism of his kind, which looked back to the good old days when the Israelites were a shepherd and farmer folk, and riches had not cursed men's lives, he regards the great cities as wholly evil.

> What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria?
> And what is the sin of Judah? is it not Jerusalem?

They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. Because of the sins of the nobles, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field," — here speaks the peasant — "and Jerusalem shall become heaps." Announcing the word of Yahweh, the prophet yet remains faithful to his own circumstances and point of view.

The Book of Micah affords a glimpse of the popular reaction to prophetic censure. The guilty auditors, to stifle their own conscience, try to silence the speaker. "Drivel not," they say, "let none talk of these things. Is the spirit of Yahweh impatient? Do not his words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" — as they would like to persuade themselves and others that they are doing. They try to evade the prophet's condemnation by convincing themselves that it does not apply. But Micah answers them. The heads of Jerusalem judge for reward, the priests teach for hire, the prophets divine for money. "Yet they lean upon Yahweh, and say, Is not Yahweh in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us." Even if they are honest in their belief that they have Yahweh's favor, assuredly they are blind

to God's true character. The prophet had to fight both hypocrisy and ignorance. It must have seemed ever a losing battle.

The oracles of Micah are significant notably as they illuminate the nature of Hebrew prophecy in its several aspects. Micah himself had something of the traditional frenzy of the guild. Transported by the horror of impending ruin, he cries out,

> For this will I wail and howl;
> I will go stripped and naked;
> I will make a wailing like the jackals,
> And a lamentation like the ostriches.

But he distinguishes sharply between his own mission and the business of the popular nationalist prophets. "Thus saith Yahweh concerning the prophets that make my people to err; that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even sanctify war against him." When they are fed, they announce smooth things; but if they fail of their hire, they declare a holy war on their employers. With a sarcasm the more biting because the allegation is true, Micah exposes their perversity: "If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people." With terrible plainness Micah proclaims a doom upon false prophets and all the mantic tribe, a veritable twilight of the idols:

> Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision;
> And it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine;
> And the sun shall go down upon the prophets,
> And the day shall be black over them.
> And the seers shall be put to shame,
> And the diviners confounded;
> Yea, they shall all cover their lips;
> For there is no answer of God.

With equal directness, yet in words fraught with immense meaning, Micah adds,

> But I, I am full of power by the spirit of Yahweh,
> And of judgment, and of might,
> To declare unto Jacob his transgression,
> And to Israel his sin.

A consummate statement of the true prophet's character and calling.

In the last four decades of the eighth century, events crowded tumultuously upon the two Hebrew kingdoms. After a long and prosperous reign parallel with the rule of Jeroboam II in Israel, King Uzziah of Judah died about the year 740. Some five years later his successor Jotham was followed on the throne by his son Ahaz, a weak-willed youth, controlled by the harem. Soon after his accession, the usurper Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus attacked Judah. In panic, Ahaz purchased the help of Assyria; and the confederates were thrown back from Jerusalem. Damascus fell before the Assyrians in 732, and Samaria ten years later. In 727 Hezekiah mounted the throne of Judah. The Assyrians, skirting the Judean borders, defeated the Egyptians and Philistines at Raphia in 719; and again, in 711, when they had conquered the Philistines, they threatened the little highland kingdom. Finally the Assyrians in 701 laid siege to Jerusalem; then strangely and as though suddenly in a night, the invading army withdrew.

Throughout this period of forty years, a time of instant menace of disaster, a web of conspiracy, intrigue, and counterplot, Judah playing Egypt and the Philistine cities against the irresistible might of Assyria, flashes of hope lighting for a moment the thick-gathering clouds of despair, Jerusalem was counselled, scourged, emboldened, and inspirited by the flaming presence and mordant words of a prophet, by name Isaiah, — "Yahweh is salvation."

The year that King Uzziah died, a young aristocrat of Jerusalem

had a vision. Within the Temple, close by the altar, he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; above, the seraphim, winged beings of consuming fire, sang one to another antiphonally,

> Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts;
> The whole earth is full of his glory.

Appalled by the sight of radiant holiness incarnate in humanly visible image, the youth cried out in awed dismay, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts." Then flew one of the seraphim to him, bearing a glowing stone taken with tongs from off the altar, and touched his mouth with it. "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven." The voice of the Lord said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The youth answered, "Here am I; send me."

Isaiah's earliest oracles to the citizens of Jerusalem on more than one occasion (2 5–4 1, 5, 9 8–10 4), like the words of the prophets in Israel, bore only condemnation, applying primarily to Judah, but so wide was the prophet's cognizance, indicting the northern kingdom also. To the censure of social iniquities practised by the dominant class and the demoralizing luxury of the rich, both men and women, the young reformer added a charge not only against the worship of idols, but also against the resort to divination and enchantments in place of belief and trust in God. And he proclaimed the inevitable day of Yahweh's judgment with varied penalties.

Such was the tenor of Isaiah's prophecy from the beginning to the end of his labors. But he offered constructive teaching as well, promises of hope, — though only for the future and contingent upon repentance. The ruin that Yahweh is bringing upon his people will be mitigated by the salvation of the righteous, so few indeed as to con-

stitute but a remnant. Yahweh must needs destroy, in the cleansing of the nation.

> I will turn my hand upon thee,
> And thoroughly purge away thy dross,
> And will take away all thine alloy.

Then shall dawn another day.

> I will restore thy judges as at the first,
> And thy counsellors as at the beginning:
> Afterward thou shalt be called The city of righteousness,
> A faithful town.
> Zion shall be redeemed with justice,
> And they that return of her with righteousness.

In that day it shall come to pass that "a remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God." Throughout long, disheartening years, while conditions and occasions seemed to call only for condemnation, Isaiah was sustained by his positive faith. At the ultimate moment of extreme crisis, when the Assyrians were moving upon Jerusalem, the prophet sent this word to the frightened king: "The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of mount Zion they that shall escape: the zeal of Yahweh of hosts will perform this."

This ultimate moment, also, was the vindication of another doctrine of Isaiah, the inviolability of Jerusalem. Though Yahweh was indeed, as Amos had already taught, a God who extended his rule over other nations, yet the fate of his worship as peculiarly the God of Israel was bound up with the survival of his people in their own land, whose dearest soil and crowning glory was Jerusalem, David's city. Yahweh was supreme, not only in holiness and justice, but in majesty and power. Though he destroy, yet would he also save. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-

stone of sure foundation." "As birds hovering, so will Yahweh of hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will pass over and preserve it."

Linked with the theme of a righteous remnant dwelling in the redeemed city is Isaiah's conception of the ideal king. In contrast to the present inept rulers of a wicked and perverse people, God will raise up a prince who shall reign gloriously.

> Unto us a child is born,
> Unto us a son is given;
> And the government shall be upon his shoulder:
> And his name shall be called
> Wonderful counsellor, Mighty God,
> Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Other passages of similar import in the Book of Isaiah, if not by Isaiah himself, were inspired by his teaching. The idea was very precious to the faithful. The expectation of the coming of Yahweh's "Anointed," the Messiah, allured and sustained the Jews in their darkest hours of adversity and humiliation, — the fulfilment of their highest worldly aspirations.

A rigorous censor of his people's sins, with whatever threat of imminent doom or promise of consolation, Isaiah was not a sudden apparition nor lonely voice. The prophet intervened actively in the troubled politics of his time, as both critic and mentor, but always as the spokesman of Yahweh. He rested his judgment, not on the practical expediency of the moment, but on the eternal principles of righteousness. His understanding of Yahweh's nature, his faith in the power of God to execute the divine purpose, enabled him with surest wisdom to counsel the rulers of Judah at the most critical junctures. When Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus laid siege to Jerusalem, King Ahaz and his people were stricken with panic fear. The prophet confronted the king: Be quiet; fear not, neither let

thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands. It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. But have faith in God. For if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. Yahweh of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear and your dread. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? Isaiah announces the coming of the waters of the River, the Assyrians in their might, to lay waste the lands pertaining to Damascus and Samaria; and knowing the craven unbelief of Ahaz and his people, he declares the flood shall sweep onward into Judah, and overflow and pass through with destruction. Thus Yahweh spoke to his prophet with a strong hand.

It came to pass as Isaiah had said. Damascus and Samaria were overthrown. Judah, however, purchased a temporary respite at the price of vassalage to Assyria. As tense years went by, the subject kingdom grew restive under the yoke; the rulers began intriguing with neighbor states and with Egypt. Again the prophet intervened with trenchant counsel. To Ahaz he had recommended a policy of inaction, trusting in the might of Yahweh to protect his people according to his own high purposes. The practical corollary of this advice was the avoidance of all foreign entanglements. Now that Judah was actually tributary to Assyria, he urged a quiet confident faith in God. Now, more explicitly than at the first, he condemned repeatedly with cumulative scorn the resort to Egypt as an ally in the revolt, and equally the reliance upon any material means. In vain did they look to their armor, and repair the breaches in the wall, and provide for their water supply. "But ye looked not unto him that hath done this, neither had ye respect unto him that purposed it long ago." In vain was the coming of emissaries from Philistia,

Babylon, Egypt, who sought alliance at the Judahite capital. "What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation? That Yahweh hath founded Zion, and in her — not in foreign principalities — shall the afflicted of his people take refuge." As for Egypt, the prophet, with the shrewd appraisal of a keen observer close to affairs of state, estimated the big and braggart empire of the south at its true worth. But informed though he was concerning actual conditions, he applied in judgment of the concrete practical situation the ultimate test of Yahweh's sovereign approval.

> Woe to the rebellious children, — saith Yahweh —
> That take counsel, but not of me,
> And that make a league, but not of my spirit,
> That they may add sin to sin;
> That set out to go down into Egypt,
> And have not asked at my mouth;
> To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh,
> And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!
> Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame,
> And the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

"Egypt helpeth in vain and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab — the Blusterer — that sitteth still." It is Yahweh of hosts who will protect Jerusalem and deliver it. And so it proved.

In his survey of the shifting intricate present and the swiftly ominous future, Isaiah saw clearly from the first that the resistless march of Assyria must finally overwhelm Judah. In view of such a disaster, as incredible to the devout if misguided worshippers of Yahweh as the prophet saw it to be inevitable, it was necessary to vindicate Yahweh's omnipotence. Therefore Isaiah declared that the disaster overtaking the people was the merited punishment which God would visit upon them for their sins, and that the Assyrian, whatever his own persuasion of his invincible might, was but the

instrument of Yahweh's purpose. "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation!" The prophet was enabled to forecast the coming of the conqueror by his acumen; his dialectic, sharpened by quick insight, served to reconcile the seeming contrast between the sovereign rule of Yahweh and the ruin of his people. But to foresee that the tidal power of the invader would be flung back at the very gates of Jerusalem exceeded the scope of ordinary reckoning. To affirm the discomfiture of the enemy with the same assurance that Isaiah had certified his approach, was an act of supreme faith, supremely justified by the event.

From the welter of the times, from the aggregate of weak-willed or faint-hearted kings, intriguing officials, and inconstant populace, Isaiah emerges as the one commanding personality in Jerusalem, urgent, resolute, indomitable. Idealist though he was, the politicians of Judah were afraid of him. They felt his influence against their devious schemes to be so powerful that they attempted to conceal their manœuvres, hoping to outwit by accomplished facts an opponent whose only weapon was the word. Isaiah, more than a match for them, exposed their futility by a stinging rebuke.

> Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from Yahweh,
> And whose works are in the dark,
> And that say, Who seeth us?
> And who knoweth us?
> Ye turn things upside down!

Even their ridicule was of no avail to disarm the prophet, for adroitly and with piercing irony he turned their own blade against the scoffers themselves. They said mockingly,

> Whom will he teach knowledge?
> And whom will he make to understand the message?
> Them that are weaned from the milk,
> And drawn from the breasts?

And they add in childish lisping syllables,

ki tsav latsav tsav latsav
qav laqav qav laqav
z'er sham
z'er sham

which is interpreted,

For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept;
Line upon line, line upon line;
Here a little,
There a little.

With the same mockery but to more terrible effect, Isaiah comes back at them: "Nay, but by men of strange lips and with another tongue will he speak to this people; to whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary: yet they would not hear. Therefore shall *the word of Yahweh* be unto them 'precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little'; that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken!"

The scoffers "that rule this people that is in Jerusalem" had reason to fear Isaiah. Though indeed his only weapon was the word, he was immensely resourceful in the wielding of it. His own name, "Yahweh is salvation," he regarded as significant; and he gave symbolic names to his two sons, "A remnant shall return" and "Spoil speedeth, prey hasteth." At his deft command stood a richly stored armory of gleaming image and piquant phrase (10 12–19, 17 12–14, 18, 30 14, and many another). Profoundly serious of purpose as he was, he yet had an extraordinary sense of the dramatic, the astonishing, the vivid and concrete. On a great tablet, in common script that all might read, he wrote the warning phrase which he afterward bestowed as a name upon his younger son. Similarly, the epigram with which he characterized the blustering inaction of Egypt he

wrote before the people and inscribed it in a book. For three years he went about the streets of Jerusalem barefoot and stripped like a captive, to betoken the fate impending upon Egypt at the hand of Assyria; and how should Judah escape? Because Isaiah returned so insistently with such varied resources to the attack, it might seem that his words and acts were of no effect. But though he was opposed by the princes and their parrot prophets, he enlisted disciples in his cause, who were charged with the preservation of his teaching.

Through a long life Isaiah made prophecy his career. To the authority that invested him as a spokesman of Yahweh he added the force of his character and gifts, his courage, his practical wisdom, and his consummate eloquence. He confronted Ahaz with counsel and warning that the king feared to question; he dared to ask Hezekiah concerning the visit of the ambassadors from Babylon, as though he had a right to know. In a moment of terrified perplexity Hezekiah sent to him for advice. The prophet by his peremptory scathing words made and unmade ministers of the crown (22 15 f.). His knowledge of world affairs exceeded the range of Amos; his emotional nature, though no tenderer, was a richer instrument than Hosea's. In the beauty, diversity, and power of his figured speech, he was the greatest among great poets, as he was the greatest among the prophets by virtue of insight and faith.

After the Assyrians withdrew from Jerusalem in 701, and Zion remained inviolate, Isaiah ceased to prophesy. His mission was accomplished. In the sequel his teaching must have seemed to his disciples and their successors to be thwarted and vain. King Hezekiah, indeed, undertook reforms, which proved incomplete. Then the half-century that followed under Manasseh was a period of extreme reaction. The severe exalted worship of the God of righteousness en-

joined by the prophets, in whatever measure it was accepted by the people, had not availed to deliver the kingdom from its enemies nor restore it to its former glories. Judah was still tributary to Assyria. Encouraged by the example of the king, the nation abandoned itself to the cult of foreign deities, hoping to win their favor, since Yahweh had failed of power to protect them. Fanatic zeal issued, so it is inferred, in persecution of the faithful remnant. In this bloody time, such hopes as struggled to expression may have come to record in passages that found shelter in the books ascribed to the great teachers of the preceding century. But no prophet now known by name uttered the word of Yahweh.

Reaction ran its course. And the accession of the boy Josiah to the throne of Judah held promise of a better day for Yahweh's champions. Again, as a century before, prophets arose to bring tidings to the nation. Of these the first was Zephaniah, whose name is significant of the evil times that prophecy endured, — "Yahweh hath hidden." But again, as formerly, it was a message of denunciation and of doom. From the north, danger threatened, not now Assyria, for the colossus which had trampled down the world was staggering to its fall; but along its tracks a horde of savage horsemen were swarming toward the coastland. In the coming of the Scythians, about 726, Zephaniah saw God's visitation upon Judah and Jerusalem.

Of princely birth and resident in the capital, the prophet looks out over his corrupt city. Beyond the horizon of its northern hills, he discerns the ruin gathering upon the earth, the consuming fire of God's anger. It is the notable Day of Yahweh, near and hasting greatly. But instead of the day of promise, of eagerly and long awaited triumph, it is a day of wrath and trouble and distress, of

trumpet and alarm, of clouds and gloom and desolation. So Amos had proclaimed the day of brighter expectation as darkness and not light; and Isaiah had announced a day of Yahweh of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty which shall be brought low. Zephaniah elaborates the awesome theme. The destruction will be complete, consuming every living creature, beast, bird, and fish, and cutting off man from off the face of the ground. In the sobbing rhythm of the dirge, the prophet chants the ruin that will smite the cities of the Philistines, lay waste Ethiopia and Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, — which last was fulfilled in twenty years. Yahweh will stretch out his hand upon Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the day of Yahweh's wrath, the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy, for he will make a terrible end of all them that dwell in the land.

The utter devastation that Zephaniah sees impending is the punishment of the nation's sins. Like his predecessors of the century before, he declares Yahweh's anger against his wicked, perverse, unfaithful people, — yet with a difference. The old iniquities are still rampant: the princes of Jerusalem are roaring lions, her judges are evening wolves, her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have profaned the sanctuary. But furthermore, the long period of loose errancy under Manasseh had left its mark. Now Zephaniah condemns the foreign customs and alien worship which possessed the people, high and low. With a finer discrimination, he distinguishes among the miscreants: the apostates, "that are turned back from following Yahweh"; those born into idolatry, "that have not sought Yahweh, nor inquired after him"; and finally the skeptics, who have wearily lapsed into indifference, "the men that are thickened upon their lees, that say in their heart, Yahweh will not do good, neither will he do evil." And now Jerusalem must bear an

added guilt, for she has sinned against the light. The oppressing city is rebellious and polluted.

> She obeyed not the voice;
> She received not instruction;
> She trusted not in Yahweh;
> She drew not near to her God.

The nation had rejected its prophets and made their labors vain.

Powerful to strike with terror in imagery of fire and ravage, Zephaniah has but a single constructive ideal, echoing the reiterated precepts of his forerunners: "Seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be that ye will be *hid* in the day of Yahweh's anger."

Shortly before the fall of Nineveh in 606, which Zephaniah had foretold, a Judahite poet anticipates the event in verses of tremendous picture-making energy. The catastrophe but impends. Dramatically the poet hails it as enacting before his exultant gaze. He sees the conqueror drawing to the attack, the violent irresistible assault, the fall of the proud city.

> The shield of his mighty men is made red,
> The valiant men are in scarlet:
> The chariots flash with steel in the day of his preparation,
> And the cypress spears are shaken terribly.
>
> The chariots rage in the streets;
> They justle one against another in the broad places:
> The appearance of them is like torches;
> They run like the lightnings.
> . . . . . .
> The gates of the rivers are opened,
> And the palace is dissolved.
> Huzzab is uncovered, she is carried away;
> And her handmaids moan as with the voice of doves,
> Tabering upon their breasts.

Assyria, whose device was the lion, ravaged the earth like the veritable king of beasts. At last he and all his brood are brought to bay.

> Where is the den of the lions,
> And the feeding-place of the young lions,
> Where the lion and the lioness walked,
> The lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?
>
> The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps,
> And strangled for his lionesses,
> And filled his caves with prey,
> And his dens with ravin.

Then follows the sack of the city. The poet caresses his fierce imagery.

> The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels,
> And prancing horses, and jumping chariots,
> The horsemen charging, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear,
> A multitude of slain, and a great heap of carcases;
> There is no end of corpses; they stumble upon their corpses.

The author of this taunt-song was counted by the compilers of the Hebrew scriptures as a prophet. But this is not the note of Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah. In the Book of Nahum there is no concern to vindicate the righteousness of Yahweh, no condemnation of his people's sins. It is indeed the poet's own God who executes vengeance. Now, however, punishment falls not on Judah for its iniquities, but on Assyria for wrongs done to other peoples, of whom Judah was one. "Behold, I am against thee, saith Yahweh of hosts, and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame." The singer rejoices with quite human joy over the downfall of the world's oppressor.

Nahum is a poet rather than a prophet. His faith in Yahweh is the traditional faith of Israel. He brings no ethical or religious message; rather, he is the spokesman of his fellow Judahites. In unloosed

fervor of speech at a moment of explosive release, with blazing intensity of image, he utters emotions that have not elsewhere found expression. His is the heightened eloquence of the nations that were ground into mute dust by the heel of the omnipotent ruthless foe. The humiliations of countless bitter years are transmuted suddenly to triumph; the silenced hatreds of generations cry aloud in this shout of vindictive exultation. Herein Nahum illustrates the shadows of Israel's temper. The great prophets, laboring in active opposition to the mass opinions and currents of their time, stood alone. Nahum, lifted on the surge of popular feeling, becomes the voice of the crowd. In his taunt-song, echoing the ferocity and scorn of ancient days when the tribes rallied to battle against Sisera, resounds the secular passion of his race.

Nineveh, lair of the Assyrian lion, was blotted out. To her dominion succeeded Chaldean Babylon. Two years before her fall, — in 608, King Josiah of Judah, who had carried through the reforms ordained by the Book of the Law, was killed in battle with the Egyptians at Megiddo. His son Jehoahaz had reigned but three months when he was taken captive by the victorious Pharaoh Necho, who set upon the Judean throne the deposed king's half-brother Jehoiakim. The new monarch proved a wicked ruler, apostate, covetous, oppressive, loving luxury. A vassal of Egypt on his accession, and afterward tributary to Babylon when the Chaldean Nebuchadrezzar had defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish in 605, he introduced into Judah the execrable cults of Egypt and Assyria, to the hurt of Yahweh's true worship. After three years Jehoiakim rebelled against his overlord of Babylon. The Chaldeans invaded his kingdom; when his son Jehoiachin had reigned but three months, in 597, they sacked Jerusalem, and deported its chief citizens to the number

of ten thousand. None remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

In darkness and disaster, when Yahweh seemed withdrawn in aloof and awful majesty, manifesting himself only to punish and not to save his desperate people, there were thinkers in Judah who dared to question God's ways. Habakkuk was termed a prophet, — justly in the measure that he proclaimed the divine purpose. In attitude, however, he was a skeptic, not wholly doubting, but desiring knowledge, seeking ardently to discern truth, which other prophets had assumed as absolute. Yahweh is a God of righteousness, of justice. Yet the prophet-thinker sees evil on every side, destruction, violence, strife; the wicked oppress the righteous; and justice is perverted. Why should it be so?

Therefore Habakkuk addresses himself, not like his predecessors to the nation with words of censure, but to God with questionings. How long will Yahweh suffer iniquity to prevail? The seeker's faith supports him. "Art thou not from everlasting, O Yahweh, my God, my Holy One? we shall not die." But the problem is greater than he can solve.

> Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil,
> That canst not look on perverseness,
> Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously,
> And holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the
> man that is more righteous than he?

That Yahweh is raising up the dread Chaldeans to punish the wicked but complicates the problem. For the Chaldeans, bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth of the earth to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs, coming all of them for violence and gathering captives as the sand, they too are guilty in their turn. Shall the righteous God only use the wicked as his instrument, and not punish them? So the answer is still farther removed. With the

devoted courage of a sincere true skeptic, able to confront his problem, whether the cost to him be evil or good, Habakkuk awaits the issue.

> I will stand upon my watch,
> And set me upon the tower,
> And I will look forth to see what he will speak with me,
> And what I shall answer concerning my complaint.

And Yahweh spoke with him, and said,

> Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets,
> That he may run that readeth it.
> Behold, his — the Chaldean's — soul is puffed up,
> it is not upright in him;
> But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.

His questionings answered, the prophet announces a series of woes upon drunkenness, rapacity, violence, idolatry, after the manner of his predecessors, notably Isaiah; allusively he quotes (2 12–14) Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. In his grasp of abstract principles, he reveals a new reflective and generalizing power. Though Habakkuk lacks the absolute indefeasible conviction that sustained his fellows, the lesson that he taught of patient faith won through doubt, was needed in his day, when the foundations of the nation, its political existence and all individual security, were crumbling. Within two decades, the Chaldeans, in their second onslaught, destroyed Jerusalem and swept the people into captivity.

Through the crowded years that Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk prophesied, another and greater prophet was active at Jerusalem, urgent by word and deed to counsel, censure, and threaten his perplexed countrymen. Jeremiah began his labors at the same time as Zephaniah, about 626, when Judah was menaced by the Scythian invasion; and still as Yahweh's spokesman he was taken into Egypt

with the colonists whom the Chaldeans had left in Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. Curiously as it seems, though these four prophets were contemporary, none, except Habakkuk and he only indirectly, takes note of any other. Jeremiah, however, showed himself amply acquainted with the writings of his predecessors of the century before. Among them the teacher who exercised the greatest influence upon him was Hosea.

Like the elder prophet of Yahweh's love for his errant people, Jeremiah was a man of extreme sensibility, capable of the deepest tenderness. Sprung from a family of priests resident in the village of Anathoth a few miles northeast of the capital, he felt himself, despite his shrinking nature, to have been predestined to his arduous calling. Though he considered himself but a child, Yahweh would make him to be as a defenced city and an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land of Judah, its kings, princes, priests, and people. Experience proved that he had need of the utmost fortitude.

Entering upon the work to which Yahweh had commissioned him, Jeremiah takes up the burden of his forerunners. In his earliest addresses, adopting the tone and imagery of Hosea, he proclaims anew the secular infidelity of the nation, which had incontinently swerved from the devotion of its youth and grievously wounded God's love. Yahweh had planted Israel a noble vine, a wholly right seed, but now it is turned into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine. The people have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, and these indeed broken cisterns, that can hold no water. With piteous pleading again and again Yahweh reproaches his backsliding adulterous children; he is eager mercifully to pardon, if only the people would return to him. But they have remained obdurate. In vain the chastisements which God visited upon them; they would receive no correction, but slew the prophets. Not only

the ignorant and foolish have sinned; even more culpable are the ruling classes, who should have known God's commandments. If the folk have stupidly gone after the false gods of their fields, how guilty are the privileged, who arrogantly deny Yahweh altogether and vaunt themselves on their fancied security: for they say, "It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine." The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule at their hands; and the people love to have it so. Of repentance there is no longer any hope. Therefore at last and irrevocably, destruction is coming from the north, to overwhelm the iniquitous and apostate nation.

Such was the tenor of Jeremiah's earlier discourses, in the reign of Josiah. And throughout his long tempestuous life, he ceased not to reiterate his charges against the people's sins and infidelity, and to threaten punishment. To this extent, except for the stamp of his individuality upon phrase and image, Jeremiah seems to add little to the now familiar prophetic indictment. He had besides much in common with the methods of his fellows, in respect of significant visions and the performance of symbolic acts to reënforce his teaching. Two themes of his doctrine, however, become salient; and he is distinguished among all the prophets by certain qualities of temper.

Isaiah, though he condemned the idolatrous practices of Judah, affirmed the inviolability of the Temple. His teaching, vindicated throughout a century, had won for itself the authority of a dogma, which the heedless people with ready overconfidence accepted as the assurance of their security in the midst of thick-coming alarms. Not so Jeremiah. In the very gate of the Temple, he cries to the thronging worshippers:

Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, are these. For if ye thor-

oughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place. . . . Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely — a clear reference to the Ten Words — and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?

But because the people have not hearkened to the word of Yahweh spoken by his prophets, therefore the Temple wherein they trust shall be like the ancient venerable sanctuary of Shiloh laid in ruins.

In these crashing sentences, reaching the inmost centre of cherished belief, sweeping away the last prop of traditional practice, Jeremiah proclaims anew and finally the characteristic prophetic doctrine of the falsity and futility of mere ritual. Then he takes a step beyond his predecessors. They had rested their case on the covenant between Yahweh and Israel made at the beginning. Because Yahweh had chosen Israel to be his people, they owed him fealty. In that they had gone after other gods, in that their social iniquities did violence to the nature and demands of Yahweh as a God of righteousness, they had transgressed the covenant. The compact was with the whole nation as an entirety. But now Yahweh will make a new covenant, no longer imposed upon all without discrimination and objectively valid as a general law, but binding upon each person because it receives his individual willing acceptance. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying,

Know Yahweh; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest." The seed was planted of old; the growth, precarious but passionately nurtured, here opens into flower.

Of all the prophets Jeremiah has left the most detailed record of his experiences and the fullest revelation of his personality. The discourses which he had spoken through more than twenty years he dictated to a faithful scribe, Baruch; and when King Jehoiakim with angry contempt cut and cast the roll piece by piece into the brazier burning before him until it was consumed, then Baruch wrote upon a new roll all the words of the first book with many additions. The narratives interwoven with the prophecies tell a thrilling story of the persecutions to which Jeremiah was constantly subjected. His townsmen of Anathoth, perhaps jealous of the priestly rights which they felt the prophet had assailed so irreverently, sought his life. As a consequence of his blasphemous words concerning the destruction of the Temple, the priests and the nationalist prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. Jeremiah was rescued from their fury only by the intervention of the princes and by certain of the elders of the land, who cited in his defence the parallel instance of Micah in the days of Hezekiah. Following upon an address delivered in the Temple court, the chief officer of the Temple, a priest's son, smote Jeremiah, and imposed upon him the public humiliation of the stocks. When the Chaldeans had withdrawn from the siege of Jerusalem because of the advance of an Egyptian army, the prophet attempted to visit his native village. As he was leaving the city, he was arrested at the gate as a deserter to the Chaldeans; the princes had him flogged and thrown into prison. After many days King Zedekiah released him that he might ask the prophet's counsel, and then transferred him to the court of the guard. The princes had good reason to pursue Jeremiah with their hostility, for

he continually advised surrender to the besiegers, that the capital might be spared total destruction. Accordingly on the charge that he weakened the hands of the soldiers and the people, seeking not their welfare but their hurt, the princes, with the forced assent of the king, cast the prophet into a deep dungeon to die in the mire. Thence he was drawn out by an Ethiopian eunuch, now with the secret connivance of the vacillating monarch, — concealed for fear of the princes. Once more Zedekiah asked counsel of the prophet, and received the same reply: Surrender or perish. The king, however, promised not to put him to death nor to deliver him into the hands of the men that sought his life. But Jeremiah abode in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken. Treated with distinguished favor by the victorious Chaldeans, the prophet signally without honor in his own country chose to remain in Judah. Finally against his will and contrary to his advice, he was carried off by the refugees into Egypt.

It was not easy to be a prophet in the day of Judah's eclipse. And often Jeremiah faltered. Bitterly aware of his innate weaknesses, yet he knew himself to be fortified for his task by the strength of Yahweh. But not without protest and questionings. "O Yahweh, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded; thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed." At terrible cost to himself. "I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out; I cry, Violence and destruction; because the word of Yahweh is made a reproach unto me, and a derision, all the day." Sensitive, idealistic, yearning for affection, but denied by Yahweh's decree the consolations of wife and children, reaping only hatred and calumny, he felt to the quick the hostility of those who should have been his familiar friends; of the nobles, the priests, and the servile prophets, the enmity was natural and inevitable, but even his breth-

ren and the house of his father, even they dealt treacherously with him: and he writhed under the contumely and shameful indignities heaped upon him beyond endurance. Withheld from him were the homely, common, pathetic joys of life. He might not enter the house of mourning to bring comfort nor the house of feasting. "I sat not in the assembly of them that make merry nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand." As with his people in the day of God's visitation, so for the lonely prophet — ever silence and darkness: no voice of mirth or of gladness, no voice of bridegroom and bride, no sound of the millstones nor light of the lamp. Afflicted not only by the sorrows that smote himself, he suffered in his own person anguish for the ruin of his nation. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" That his message had to be a sentence of doom, a counsel of despair, wounded him to the heart. At moments, so intolerable were his grief and struggle and humiliation, he cursed his birth. "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention to the whole earth!" "Cursed be the day wherein I was born. . . . Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" He carried his plea direct to Yahweh, with anxious doubt: "Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? Wilt thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?" "Righteous art thou, O Yahweh, when I contend with thee; yet would I reason the cause with thee: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?" — echoing the skeptic Habakkuk and anticipating Job. Despite his anguished fears, he had no lack of courage on occasion to face his enemies squarely; he could rise from the depths to call for vengeance upon them.

In the issue, the compulsions of the divine charge laid upon him overcome his weakness.

If I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain.

O Yahweh, thou knowest: know that for thy sake I have suffered reproach. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Yahweh, God of hosts.

So through swift alternations of despair and assurance, of questionings and insight, the prophet triumphs over the man, by Yahweh's power.

Sustained in his bitterest suffering and frustration by his fervent, idealistic, all-possessing love of God, Jeremiah incarnated the genius of Israel in its finest essence.

Abrupt, incomprehensible, terrific, these preachers of righteousness and disaster. But prophets were familiar figures in Israel from even before the days of King Saul. Roving through the countryside, moving about the streets of cities, mingling with the crowds at the high places, recognizable by dress and demeanor, they had a ready and curious hearing. Then suddenly, when storm clouds gathered on the northern horizon ominously as never before in turbulent, war-torn Israel, men of God frighted the people with strange new sentences. They were like prophets, yet different by the tenor of their words: instead of encouragement, — censure and threatening; instead of good fortune, — doom. They spoke in the name of Yahweh, but not the Yahweh whom Israel worshipped so zealously. The people listened with eagerness, amazement, anger, defiance.

The world which these flaming messengers projected upon the

astonishment of their hearers was indeed Israel's world, but seen in another light. The life of the shepherd, the peasant, the city-dweller; the tarnished majesty of kings, the intrigues of politicians, the perfidy of priests and prophets, the crimes of the powerful, the debauchery of the rich, the deceits of the trader; the wild throngs at the hillside altars, their drunken revelry, the blood and smoke of sacrificial flesh; the menace of drought or storms, of famine and pestilence, the alarms of war, the homely joys of quietness: — all these and more were plastic in their hands, moulded to high and colored relief. But athwart this familiar world, drenching it with lurid gleam or thick darkness, tearing away its cherished things and shaking its foundations, swept cataclysmic wrath and fire and destruction, terror on every side, invoked in the name of Israel's God.

In their speech was something mysterious, remote yet piercingly actual, something pregnant, provocative. The addresses as spoken were brief, sententious; oracular, they were cast in rhythmic form. Whether consciously or not, they were fashioned to compel attention, to startle, terrify. When the oracles were written down, they were combined into larger units, but without a controlling principle of arrangement as a whole; and the "Books" of the prophets were subjected to many later editings with additions, before they found their place in the canon of scripture. Upon their hearers these swift sharp utterances crashed overwhelmingly, though they roused princes and populace to violent antagonism. They were charged with instant practical meanings, calling to deliberate act; fraught with highest spiritual import, they were worthy of being pondered: but spoken in the heat of scornful condemnation, of pleading pity, of yearning love, they kindled or seared with the flame of their enthusiasm. Imagination transmutes the near, and ranges far, to conjure images for the prophets' emotions. Sensitive response to the com-

plexities of human feeling, delight in landscape, knowledge of the ways of beasts and birds, a keen awareness of nature's workings, manifest in the sun beneficent or blasting, in the winds, the dew, the rains, give immediacy to their urgent message. Close to actuality, weighted with thought, illumined by insight, yet their glowing speech fuses the will by the ardor of its conviction. Moral earnestness, the fervor of religion, reach the intensity of passion.

The great prophets addressed the crowd, but they were not demagogues; they were destructive critics indeed, but not agitators; reformers, they were not revolutionaries. If they spoke on behalf of the poor and humble, it was not as champions of one class opposed to another, but as preachers of divine justice, holiness and loving-kindness. Not class but condition was the object of their solicitude; it was the defenceless of whatever station, the widow and fatherless children, the impoverished without a helper, the sojourner lacking civil rights, for whom they had regard. They did not, with words that cajoled their hearers, incite the hatred of one class against another: they charged the very sinners themselves with their own proper sins; all classes were guilty, each in its own way. They were not self-regarding; they sought no material advantage, no profit for one at the cost of another. Not the amelioration of class conditions for its own sake was their aim, but the doing of God's will. Whether in condemnation or in pleading, the standard they applied in judgment, the motive that impelled them, was less concern for man than love of God. In passing censure on their times, they attacked individual kings for their personal wickedness; they bitterly assailed the venality of unfaithful priests and false prophets and corrupt judges; with fiery scorn they inveighed against the licentiousness and oppressive greed of the nobles: all of whom should have been

the upright rulers and trustworthy guides of the people. But they did not question the established order of state and society; not in the system of government, but in the persons representing it, they demanded reform, a change not of frame but of heart. Their incentive purpose was not social and merely human; it was altogether religious, prompted by love of the divine. The great prophets were patriots, seeking utterly the welfare of their country, grieved for the hurt of all their people, and yearning passionately for the healing of the whole nation by the power of God.

So complete was their devotion, so intimately was religion the pulse of the national life, it was natural that the prophets should touch the tangled politics of their day, not however as popular agitators, but wholly and always as spokesmen of Yahweh. Their interest in the national policy, notably in foreign affairs, was a religious interest; they saw that the fate of Israel's religion, which was for them the only true religion, was bound up with the future of the people. Their knowledge of the world and their political acumen fitted them to be statesmen of the highest wisdom; but they moved to their task of criticism and decision ever as prophets. So little were they revolutionaries or party leaders that their advice, though it counted powerfully with the kings, was contrary to the mass opinion, and they had no popular following. They were not concerned for the expediency of the instant, for the temporary fortune of the state; the course of action which they urged, seemingly inconsistent with itself as to detail in various crises, had reference solely to the requirements of Yahweh, demanding absolute faith in him and practical conformity to his will; in Israel's contacts with foreign states they counselled, as the case might be, resistance or surrender, independence or submission. They had but one guiding principle, their single criterion: it was the paramountcy of religion in all life,

the true religion of Yahweh. They preached exclusive reliance upon Yahweh's power to coerce nations and events to the fulfilment of his divine purposes. If only the people remained loyal and pure in their allegiance to him, whether the Hebrew state survived or fell was of less moment than obedience to his commands and the right worship of Yahweh as the all-sovereign God.

To their contemporaries the great prophets may have seemed revolutionary, for they constantly proclaimed the destruction of the nation. What the people failed to grasp was the fact that the threatened disaster was the direct consequence of their own sins. The prophets did not incite to the overthrow of the state; they saw it to be inevitable. It was to be brought about by the considered act of Yahweh as punishment which the iniquities of the nation had made necessary. The prophets foresaw and declared the destruction to come. In general, they depended on prediction only to this extent, — according to measure that a cause must be followed by its appropriate effect. Often indeed they announced events in the future which did not come to pass as they had said; they had no means of reckoning not liable to ordinary error. Prediction for its own sake was not their mission; that might be left to the soothsayers and the popular prophets. They based their threats of impending disaster, not on any gift of supernatural foresight, but on their own sure knowledge of Yahweh's character and purpose. So God would punish and destroy, for cause.

But he would not make a "full end." A remnant would return to Yahweh in repentance and righteousness. God would restore the old forms, but purified. The call to repentance, often a despairing call, yet sounded the hope that better things were possible. From the iniquities, miseries, and utter distress of their own day, the prophets looked forward to a new kingdom, its ruler truly God's

"anointed." As compensation for the evils of the present, the prophets discerned, in rare moments of illumined daring, dimly a kingdom of the future, but a kingdom upon earth, wherein the reign of the righteous prince would be attended with the blessings of material well-being. The redeemed of Israel would live again a people fashioned after God's own design, dwelling in Yahweh's kingdom of righteousness. The preachers of punishment and disaster were creators.

Among all classes there were evils, even as the prophets pictured them, but these exponents of divine righteousness saw the human evils, not in their just perspective, but distorted by the contrast with what they felt so passionately ought to be. Surely, in the mass, the nation was corrupt. Quite naturally the folk worshipped the gods of the soil, the givers of material increase, invoking the baals by the name of Yahweh, because the simple peasants were unable to distinguish the false from the true. The powerful practised oppression, which fell most heavily upon the humble. Justice was perverted by bribery, to the advantage of the rich and the injury of the poor. The priests were mercenary, encouraging lavish sacrifices for the sake of the revenue that accrued to them. The wealthy were dissolute: the women drunken and incontinent; the men unscrupulous in all relations of life. Doubtless the Hebrews were no more and no less wicked than other peoples. The wonder is not that there were evils in Israelite society, but that there were men who perceived them. The depths in which the prophets figured the people indicate the heights on which the prophets stood.

In demanding reform of the nation's ways, as token and pledge of obedience to God's sublime will, the prophets had no thought of proclaiming anything new. Their reference was to the elder days. Israel heedlessly or wantonly had strayed afar, so they believed, from

the true and pure piety of its youth; now it should seek again the old paths and walk therein. In pleading so insistently for a *return*, they assumed on the people's part the knowledge of Yahweh's demands. Apparently they were not themselves aware of the progress in ethical and religious thought which each contributed to his own time; for them, the truths that they declared were absolute and self-evident. Coming at special crises in the catastrophic last years of the two Hebrew kingdoms, the great prophets brought a message suited to the immediate occasion. But above the exigencies of the moment, far beyond the present range of their hearers' understanding, these preachers of God's retributive righteousness proclaimed truths universal and eternal.

Seemingly the people went their inconstant reckless way, unheeding, obdurate. Israel and Judah were carried to dispersion and captivity, their capitals were overthrown, the state perished, as the prophets had threatened, in punishment of a sinful and unrepentant nation. But desperate as was the prophets' own view of their world, there was in fact a faithful remnant, however few. Words accusing, condemnatory, exciting the extreme of hostility, were yet not suffered to pass like breath into nothingness. Their oracles, spoken for an occasion, were written down, whether by the prophets themselves, by devoted scribes, or by loyal disciples. Thus preserved, then cherished, they became, after the Exile, the *sacred scriptures* of later generations. So these great teachers were not altogether solitary, though against the mass they stood out as singular, and indeed unparalleled. The genius of the whole people, the racial qualities wrought through centuries to their finest temper, made possible the prophets. In them the character, the soul, of Israel attained completest embodiment and expression.

What the prophets pleaded for with utmost giving of all their

powers was not beauty, art, joy of life, intellectual accomplishment, but righteousness and love of God. They were true to racial urge and to their individual calling. Israel's supreme achievement, its distinction among the nations, was its religion.

XVII

YAHWEH AND HIS PEOPLE

Out of the unknown came a few tribes, whom a common fortune in wandering and settlement, in wars and peaceful toil, wrought into a nation. After a brief noon of glory, the nation split in twain. The petty kingdoms endured not four troubled centuries, and perished violently. As other and great nations rose and fell, so little Israel-Judah. But something of this people survived the overthrow of their state. Exile and return to the homeland in subjection to foreign powers changed the circumstances of their life but could not crush their spirit. Through all mutations of outer form, a continuity of temper and purpose determined the history of the Hebrews and distinguished their achievement. The unifying force, the vital principle, of their continuing experience, was their religion.

Obscure in the mists before dawn, the beginnings of Israel's religion may be shadowed forth only by conjecture and wide inference. Early man, more aware of the world about him than conscious of himself, leaves no unequivocal record of his inner life. What he thinks and feels must be inferred from what he does. So the meaning of his objects of worship and the intention of his ritual are capable of a various interpretation, which is necessarily precarious. Some elements of the tribal belief of the desert may be guessed from their likeness to survivals of ancient usages among the nomad Arabs of to-day, secular unchanging descendants of a stock kindred with the Hebrews. The religion of old Canaan, which the conquerors absorbed, has left its traces in the soil. Memories of ancestral custom, faded or

transformed, lingered with the Israelites: but the scriptures recounting events long since past evoke the scene only as figured in imagination; though they may echo good tradition, they are modified by the writers' own conceptions or designs. What Israel's religion became may be read authentically in the books of the great prophets. Any attempt to spell its origins must be satisfied merely to indicate possibilities.

In primæval days, all things in nature, all of human life, were penetrated by the mysterious, linked with the supernatural, pressed by the beyond-human. Powers hostile or kindly lurked everywhere; their enmity must be appeased, their favor gained. Charms and incantations were potent to coerce. Chiefly, sacrifice brought men into communion and right relations with their deities. In the desert, the night sky, spreading cool refreshing, excited their grateful wonder; winds and storms manifested dread forces; a special sacredness attached to trees and stones. One power, greater than all others, became the patron god of the tribe, of blood-kin with it. The relationship was natural, inevitable, the creation of untold ages of communal life. So the Hebrews, coming from the desert, had their protector god, their other objects of reverence and fear, their sacrifices and manner of worship, by immemorial custom.

Some of the Hebrew tribes suffered bondage in Egypt. Thence they escaped, led by a man of genius, and wandered for years in the wilderness south of Canaan. All the narratives and the great prophets too, though they differ severally as to details, agree that Moses brought to his people a new revelation of one God, whose name was Yahweh. Whether Yahweh was already known to the tribes, whether he manifested himself for the first time to Moses in the land of Midian, whether he was the god whom the Kenites worshipped from of old and whom the Hebrews now received as their own, cannot be

resolved from the conflicting traditions. Israel's religion unfolded into something different from the religions of all other peoples. The course of its development became possible to it somewhere and at some time, for the process must have had a beginning. The decisive moment seems to have been just here: to the events of the exodus and the sojourn in the wilderness, under the guidance of a great leader, the religion of Israel owed its distinctive essence. In place of the ancestral god of desert heritage, patron of his tribe from unremembered ancientness, the Hebrews at a definite instant accepted by voluntary act a single specific deity revealed to them by name. Yahweh chose Israel to be his people; Israel acknowledged Yahweh to be its God.

Originally, some gods were forces of nature. If Yahweh was that at first, yet he became much more. Seated on a mountain, perhaps volcanic, he was a deity manifest in cloud, storm, and lightning; the thunder was his voice. When the Hebrews moved to the conquest of Canaan, Yahweh indwelling in an ark was their God of war. As known progressively to Israel, he came to be a God with determinate and quite special character. By virtue of his proper name, he was a personal being, unique, not to be confounded with any other deities. Not only did he vindicate his exceeding divine might in the bringing of the tribes out of Egypt and through the wilderness. True to the obligations implied in the alliance between Yahweh and his people, he also showed his faithfulness, worthy of their trust. With Israel's advance in knowledge of Yahweh, the arbitrary incomprehensible whim that roused the gods to blind action was transmuted into clear deliberate reasonable will, recognized increasingly as righteousness.

In the relationship between Yahweh and Israel lay the kernel which flowered in the teaching of the prophets. The kernel itself con-

sisted only in the bond which linked Yahweh with his worshippers, yet a bond woven of a singular intensity of feeling. When Israel was a child, then Yahweh loved him, and called his son out of Egypt. He taught Ephraim to walk. He took them on his arms; he drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and he laid food before them. So Hosea phrased it in a later age, but with truth to the spirit of the early time. In return Israel, with all the fanatic passion of the desert strain, clave to its mighty and faithful God in enthusiasm and uttermost loyalty. Capable of persistent growth and wondrous flower, the kernel was as yet but rudimentary. For at the first, the relation of the tribes to their God was chiefly practical. Their worship secured Yahweh's favor. His purposes regarding them must be consulted, that they might be certain of his effective approval; hence their resort to the mechanism of the sacred lot. By force of their common acceptance of the one God, the tribes were brought together into a unity not only religious but political, out of which developed the nation. But from some moment onward, the religion of Israel had something that other religions had not; else Yahweh would have perished with Chemosh of Moab, Milcom of Ammon, with the many gods of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria. This something, able to unfold into the highest reaches of morality and spiritual faith, was present in the voluntary alliance between Israel and Yahweh.

Yahweh, mountain God of storms and God of war, marching from the field of Edom, led his people to hard-won victory in Canaan. Then, while the tribes were gaining a foothold on the soil, Yahweh himself was forced into a struggle for his own existence.

A farmer folk tilling the earth and breeding cattle, the Canaanites invoked the powers of fertility and reproduction. The chief god,

whatever his individual proper name, was the *Baal* of the land, its owner and lord. Not a national god, worshipped as a single entity by a whole people, the baal was the deity of a place; and the baals were as many as the several localities which each held in ownership. So Canaanite sanctuaries were everywhere. Their rites were jubilant, abandoned, licentious: feasting issued in drunkenness; devotion to the generative god was enacted in prostitution. Herein lay no possibility of moral advance.

As the Hebrew conquerors gradually fused with the Canaanites, they adopted as their own the established shrines and appurtenant rites. To their ancestral usages of the days of wandering, to Passover and New Moon and Sheep-shearing, they added now the festivals appropriate to agriculture, — the spring feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Harvest, signalizing the ripened grain, and the Feast of Ingathering, to celebrate the vintage. The god to whom now the Israelite peasants brought their offerings was Baal-Yahweh, for he had become the lord of the land and dispenser of bounty. Between the baal ruling the soil of Canaan and the Hebrew Yahweh, the farmer concerned for his own material welfare was unable to distinguish. The fusion had important consequences for the future of Israel's religion. Moreover, in effect, the contest between Yahweh and the baals involved a basic conflict between two forms of civilization. The newcomers were conservative in temper, proud of their tribal inheritance, jealous of ancestral glory, ascetic by constraint of desert meagreness, — the spirit which lived on to prompt the sect of the Rechabites and animated the austere intolerance of the prophets. But the life in Canaan allured irresistibly by its exuberance and relaxations. The Canaanite material culture prevailed, though it received the impress of Israelite domination. In the issue of worship, Yahweh triumphed over all other gods, but only by the zeal of a few

devoted inspired men after a struggle that outlasted even the ruin of the state.

Yet the God of Sinai, who brought his people into the goodly land, gained much from his contest with the native baals. Deities are the creation of their worshippers. Conceived in emotion which attends experience of the external world, born of desire or fear, they are fashioned in men's thought and moulded by circumstance. As the character of a god thus reflects the nature of his people, so in turn it determines their conduct and fate: the fortunes of both are linked in a common destiny. So it happened with Yahweh and Israel. The rigor of the nomad which beforetime limited Yahweh's nature by the measure of its own sparse intense simplicity was hostile to the enervating abundance of a riper civilization; and it would have perpetuated itself by tenacious desert custom but for the relaxations admitted to the worship of Yahweh in Canaan. The acceptance, even passive, of Baalism, which represented a more affluent and complex way of life, extended the scope of Yahweh's power and attributes. A whole country, a plenteous land, became his for a possession; the range of his interests widened; to the wielder of storm and war was added the gracious giver of bounty. Yahwism was fertilized by Baalism. Thus enriched, it entered upon broader paths of development.

Beset by the allurements and compulsions of settled life, yet the Israelites continued loyal to ancestral remembrance. Yahweh was still the God of all the people. But now the former cohesion of the tribes under a common leadership which brought them to the promised land was resolved into local groupings of the countryside. Instead of the onward march rallying to the single banner of the God of war, now each little community was in itself a centre of the worship of the patron Lord Yahweh. From each village with its outlying fields, the people assembled at the high place for sacrifice and feasting.

The hillside altar was a pile of earth or an unhewn rock, arched only by the sky. Close by it rose a pillar, *Matstsebah*, and a pole, *Asherah*, reminiscent of the sanctity of stones and trees, and bodying visibly forth the presence of the deity. At the instant of sacrifice, the altar was sprinkled or smeared with the blood of the victim; men might not eat the blood, for it was the life, and so was devoted to God: or else, more after the Canaanite manner, upon the altar parts of the slain animal were burned; thus sublimated in fire and smoke and savor, the meal was shared by the deity. So Yahweh smelled the sweet savor of Noah's offering. So David said, "If it be that Yahweh hath stirred thee up against me, let him smell an offering." And Amos: "I will not smell in your solemn assemblies." God, though conceived as breath or spirit, was reached by material means. At one and another sanctuary of old renown, like Shiloh and Beth-el, the resort of pilgrims to the great yearly festivals, stood a temple, housing a sacred object or image, not indeed fashioned as a likeness, but in substantive form certifying the immediacy of Yahweh to his worshippers. Perhaps a rude structure in a timberless land, the temple, supported by posts, was closed by doors, and was lighted by a "lamp of God." Guardian of the shrine was a priest, who also cast the sacred lot for such as came to inquire of God.

Worship in these elder artless days of husbandry was intimate and unconstrained. A farmer of the highlands of Ephraim, bringing his bullock of three years and measure of meal and skin of wine, went up from his hill village, Ramah, with his wives and children year by year to the sanctuary in Shiloh to worship and to sacrifice unto Yahweh. Two priests were there; and their custom with the people was, that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was boiling, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand; and he stuck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the

flesh-hook brought up the priest took therewith. These two priests happened to be base fellows; for preferring roast meat to boiled, they sent their servant to ask to have the flesh given to them raw, thus demanding their perquisite even before the sacrifice to Yahweh. Their own gratification had no regard of sacredness; thinking only of themselves, they despised the offering of Yahweh. However, it was not the priest but the head of a family who slaughtered and made offering. When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, burning the fat of the beast upon the altar for Yahweh, he gave to his family each a due portion of the feast; and they ate of the boiled flesh and drank of the wine. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before Yahweh, and returned to their house. The manner of "worshipping before Yahweh" is not told. That it was something other than sacrifice may be inferred, for the feast was held on a preceding day. In Shiloh rested the Ark, which stood to the people for Yahweh's presence; perhaps the worshippers did obeisance before it with gestures of prostration, and made supplication for divine favor to attend their ways.

The yearly pilgrimages to the sanctuary were not the whole of religious practice. Any man might sacrifice, whenever there was cause. King Saul, leading his army against the Philistines, gave command: "Roll a great stone unto me this day. Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat." And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there. And Saul built an altar unto Yahweh. Moreover, the approach to Yahweh was not limited to communal occasion. An individual might appoint his own private shrine. Gideon made an *ephod* — an oracular object associated with deity — out of gold taken as the spoils of war (Jud. 8 27). And Micah had a house of God; he made an ephod of silver, and *teraphim;* and he con-

secrated one of his sons to be his priest. Nevertheless, when opportunity was presented by chance, he was delighted to come by the ministrations of a Levite, a man trained professionally to the priestly office; and he grudged not the fee of ten pieces of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and his victuals. The migrating Danites carried off Micah's images and his priest; and they set up a shrine of their own in their new home.

The deity thus worshipped, the bestower of goods, approached rejoicingly with gifts of the first fruits of flock and field, and sharing in the feast, was a friendly God, accessible at all times and very near his people. Suppliants might come before him not only with offering but in petition. So Hannah prayed earnestly aloud to Yahweh to grant her a son; and for her part, in return, she bound herself by a vow to dedicate him to God's service. So Saul offered a burnt offering to entreat Yahweh's favor; and he vowed himself and his followers to abstinence that he might oblige Yahweh to give him victory. No enterprise of moment was undertaken without asking counsel of God. The overruling of Yahweh was ever present in men's thought and feeling. His name was constantly on their lips, not merely in the customary formula of an oath, "Yahweh do so to me and more also, if —" or "As Yahweh liveth," but invoked in a spirit of real piety. David said, "Yahweh that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." The address of Abigail to David, ceremonious, ingratiating, quite instinctively makes appeal to Yahweh as the guide of action. "Now, therefore, my lord, as Yahweh liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing Yahweh hath withholden thee from blood-guiltiness, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now therefore let thine enemies, and them that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. . . . The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of

life with Yahweh thy God. . . . And when Yahweh shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thy handmaid." And David said to Abigail, "Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sent me this day to meet thee." It is the voice of actual men and women as they felt and spoke.

So in this morning time, men's converse with the deity was simple, homely, spontaneous. The requirements of the cultus were not beyond their power to fulfil. The technique of sacrifice, the distinction between clean and unclean, the necessities of performance or avoidance, the ordinary religious duties, whether practised by custom or taught by the priest, fell within their comprehension. Yahweh was present and real. To visit his sanctuary was to "see his face." The gift was not too calculating, but offered thankfully. To sacrifice was to rejoice, eating and drinking before Yahweh. Religion was not conscious of itself.

Of less scope than the great festivals, but cherished from ancestral days, were usages observed within the home. Thus the feast of the New Moon was kept by families. Disposed in private houses, also, were *teraphim*, images whose exact purpose is not known but which had some kind of sacredness. Burial sites held in especial reverence and invocation of departed spirits witness to a cult of the dead. Below this level, all sorts of superstitions prevailed in the life of the individual. To force the hidden present or penetrate the future, diviners plied their secret trade and conjured up the shadowy dead. Enchanters practised mysterious arts. Spirits active to injure might be averted by charms and amulets. Israel's teachers strove to purge religion of these lower notions. But an emotional, unreflecting people did not easily distinguish between credulity and high faith.

Though close to the interests of his people, and worshipped joyously, Yahweh was terrible, withdrawn from knowledge, compelling

awe. There might proceed from him an evil spirit to trouble and betray. He stopped the ear of men from hearkening to correction, that he might slay them (1 Sam. 2 25); he prompted his favorite, David, to sin against him, seemingly that he might have warrant to punish all Israel for his wrath toward them (2 Sam. 24 1). Inscrutably he might break forth in sudden and fierce anger. But again, the terror emanating from his presence inhered in his divinity. After the fashion of men's imaginings a person, stirred by human passions, yet as their God he was supremely, inexplicably holy, — so far not in a moral but only physical sense. Holiness was utter separateness; the holy thing was removed from common use except under conditions. Primarily attributed to deity, the quality might be communicated, to persons, things, places, times. God must not be approached save with due precaution; and objects penetrated with divinity might not be touched improperly without dire penalty. So Uzzah, reaching out his hand with natural impulse to steady the swaying ark, was smitten for his rashness, that he died. If Yahweh seemed to work unaccountably, exercising ruthless whim, it was his holiness in action, beyond men's power or right to question. This dread essence of divinity by extension involved fateful issues. Thus war, as consecrated to Yahweh, waged in his name and by his help, was a holy enterprise. Before battle, the oracle was consulted, sacrifice was offered, and the soldiers were enjoined to the observance of ritual prescriptions. The defeated foe, together with women and children, and often the spoils, were placed under the "ban": devoted to Yahweh, they were given to destruction. It was a cruel God who sanctioned these practices and demanded the utmost of vengeance upon his enemies, — reflecting herein the temper of his worshippers. Yahweh was at once far off and near, benevolent patron but quickly moved to consuming wrath; he was both divine and human.

Gradually the attributes of Yahweh, his character and functions, were transformed with the changing circumstances of his people. As the God of Sinai led the Israelites to the conquest of Canaan as their God of war, and victorious, the warrior deity became lord of the land, Baal-Yahweh, so with the institution of the monarchy, the God of the tribes and of the local communities attained majesty and scope as the national God. His domain was still limited to Canaan. Though he was mightier than the gods of other peoples, his rule did not extend to their territories. So David, fleeing from Saul, complains that banished from the homeland, he can no longer worship Yahweh and benefit by his protection: "They have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the inheritance of Yahweh, saying, Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of Yahweh!" Between the God of Israel, sovereign sure protector of his nation, and Yahweh, the righteous God of all the earth, lay eventful centuries.

A tendency, latent in the purpose and the forms of worship, which began to develop as the Israelites established themselves upon the land, gathered momentum in signal fashion and measure when Solomon, having reared his sumptuous temple at the capital, endued the ritual with the splendor of multitudinous offerings. In the desert, sacrifice had been a rude and simple ceremony. An animal was slaughtered, the blood was poured out to the deity, and the flesh eaten by the worshippers: it signified, by token of the sacramental feast in common, the union of the tribesmen with their god. Different conditions induced a different attitude. As the Israelites prospered on the soil, offerings took on the intention of gifts, in gratitude for bounty conferred or solicitation of benefits desired. Because the wealth of the peasant, his grain and oil and wine, his cattle and

sheep, surpassed in amount and variety the scant fare of the nomad, so sacrifices increased enormously in number and in kind. What the ritual became is lurid in the scorn of the prophets. At Beth-el and Gilgal were sacrifices every morning and tithes every three days, and a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and ostentatious freewill-offerings (Am. 4 4). A veritable multitude of sacrifices, there were burnt-offerings, of the entire animal, and meal-offerings and the fat of peace-offerings. Notably at the dedication of the Temple, so it was reported, Solomon sacrificed two and twenty thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. The numbers, however much exaggerated, are expressive of the general lavishness of sacrifice. The beasts fed and fatted for the reeking altars were rams and bullocks and lambs and he-goats. Throngs of worshippers pressed upon the sacred precincts and trampled Yahweh's courts. Songs and the sound of viols were in their feasts. And gaily in the spirit of holiday, women flocked to the sanctuary, bedecked with nose-rings and jewels. The ceremonial at the shrine, which preceded the abandoned jollity of the feast, perhaps moved more solemnly. A command to silence: "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord Yahweh: for Yahweh hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath consecrated his guests!" (Zeph. 1 7.) The cloud and bemusing fragrance of incense rises and mingles with the hush. At some moment in the rites, the suppliants kneel and kiss the image of embodied deity. Then the spreading forth of hands toward heaven in prayer. The prophet (Is. 1 15), overlooking the worshippers, sees these hands full of blood, the wet red blood of the instant slaughter of sacrifice, and, by metaphor, the blood of the victims of their iniquities. In Isaiah's bitterly mocking words, charged with double meaning, was compressed the lesson concerning ritual that the prophets strove to teach. "Wash you, — literally and figuratively — make you clean;

cease to do evil, learn to do well!" But the people, failing to grasp the moral implications of worship, went the crass round of extravagant sacrifice.

The worshippers believed that the greater the abundance of offerings, the more would Yahweh be inclined to bestow his favor. When the efficacy of the tribute seemed thus to be determined by its quantity, the old sense of intimate communion with God gave place to a more formal, wholly materialistic conception of religious obligation. Sacrifice became communication rather than communion, — merely a means of reaching the deity for the suppliant's own advantage. Inevitably though perhaps unwittingly, a changed attitude in worship resulted in a changed view of God. Yahweh became less the patron and more a monarch, less friendly, more despotic and remote, less immediate: at the royal chapel in Jerusalem, the national God was approached by the mediation of priests; and doubtless the people took note of the king's example. The reign of Solomon was a culmination and a beginning. In this brief but crowded noon, the stream of Israel's religion, flowing broadly in the days of David, here was parted in mid-course, and henceforth the several currents ran along divergent ways. The cultus, blending old desert custom with Canaanite practice in the time before the monarchy, lingered with constant admixture of idolatry among the people throughout the countryside. The priests, gaining in worldly importance, developed ritualism ever more elaborately. Counter to these two currents, opposing both equally, — on the one hand the popular cultus for its low aims, its grossness and license, and on the other hand the priestly ritual for its failure to apprehend the moral and spiritual nature of God, — the prophets taught the true religion.

Gradually the changed conception of worship, which the Temple at

Jerusalem both expressed and quickened with new impulse, brought advantage to the priesthood. As sacrifices increased in number and variety, the ritual involved became correspondingly complex, and so required more and more the services of a specialist. From the simplest beginnings, the priestly function drew powers to itself, as religion kept pace with Israel's material and political advance. In the old days any man might offer sacrifice acceptably; there was no need of a priest. The priest's office was to make known God's will by means of the sacred lot, and to give *Torah*, the direction or law of Yahweh. Where a temple existed, he was its custodian. As their counsellor in all grave matters, the priest was intimately linked with the life of his fellows in the local community.

As the technique of sacrifice became more intricate, stress was laid upon correctness of procedure. To sin was to miss the mark, to fall short, to err in performance, with no moral implication. When the manner of the act was thus of chief concern, the spontaneous emotion of familiar rejoicing before Yahweh was constrained to more rigid forms, which developed into a highly organized praxis. The conduct of worship, therefore, tended to pass to the sole keeping of the priests; they alone, by virtue of special training, had the requisite knowledge. It was to the interest of their own dignity and influence to elaborate the ritual element in religion. Supported by perquisites derived from a share in the offerings, they may well have found it profitable to demand a greater frequency of occasion and to encourage lavishness of gifts. With this emphasis upon ceremonial, the priests became a class apart. In general, the office was hereditary, limited to certain families, though others might be appointed.

With the founding of the monarchy, religion took on an official or state character. Priests now installed at the king's court ranked among the greatest dignitaries of the nation. At the high places and

the local shrines, sacrifice continued to be offered with the ministering coöperation of the home priests, and these were still associated with the old popular religion; but between them and the hierarchs at Jerusalem, the difference was ever widening. The ancient sanctuaries, to which the people were wont to resort, yielded their authority if not their allurements to the growing prestige of the Temple; and favored by royal patronage, the official worship of the national God centred in Jerusalem. To offset the threatening supremacy of the Judahite Temple, the secessionist king Jeroboam, in his separate realm of Israel, established at Beth-el and Dan, long sacred by tradition, new royal sanctuaries, thus turning to his own designs the drift toward centralization. Yet parallel with the official worship of the capitals, although the reforms enjoined by the Book of the Law in Josiah's reign set ultimate sanction upon the exclusive legitimacy of the Temple at Jerusalem, the popular religion maintained itself till the nation perished.

Religious formalism could not escape the consequences inherent in its nature. The spirit of adoration was stifled by the materialism of mechanical ceremonial. In time, too, the possession of power brought abuse of it, and the priesthood became corrupt. "As they were multiplied, so they sinned against me. . . . They feed on the sin of my people, and set their heart on their iniquity. And it shall be, like people, like priest; and I will punish them for their ways" (Hos. 4 7–9). To their personal immorality Isaiah bore witness: they were swallowed up by wine and staggered with strong drink; they erred in vision, they stumbled in judgment (28 7). In its insistence upon the correct performance of ritual as the chief requirement of worship, the priestly religion failed to apprehend the highest possibilities of Yahweh's character.

In many religions, both primitive and mature, the dominant figure

has been the priest. From shaman or medicine-man, master of tribal magic, to the ministers of great imperial temples, versed in all the lore won by ages of culture, the customary or the official representatives of religion have been the controlling, guiding power over the wills and minds of their people. It was not so in Israel. Here were persons quite outside the sacred guilds, who had far more significance than the priests for the progress of religion. Deborah, rousing the tribes to fresh enthusiasm for their mighty God of war; Samuel, a seer and man of God, but not a priest as later writers characterized him; the roving ecstatics, proclaiming Yahweh's cause; David, Solomon, and other monarchs; then the counsellors, styled prophets, of the kings; and strange terrific men of action like Elijah and Elisha, constituting a long line of heroic personalities which culminated in the great prophets: — these, more than any priests, shaped the course of Israel as the chosen people of Yahweh. In the Judahite and Ephraimite narratives picturing the early days, priests play a minor part. They are not mentioned at all in the Book of Judges, except in the supplementary episodes, beginning with chapter 17. The adventurer David, zealous servant of Yahweh, used the priests to consult the oracle for his own purposes. King Solomon appointed and removed priests at his pleasure. Throughout the history of the two kingdoms, they were but royal officials, subject to the king's will. Only by exception, it would seem, had they a hand in politics. So Zadok, appointed a priest by David, was party to the intrigue that raised Solomon to the throne. And Jehoiada, brother-in-law of the murdered king Ahaziah of Judah, was prime mover in the conspiracy which deposed Queen Athaliah, sending her to her death, and which made the boy Jehoash king. The Jewish priesthood attained its commanding position only after the overthrow of the state, when the national kingdom gave place to a theocracy ruled by hierarchs.

Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria had their priests, cunning, ambitious, arrogant. Israel had its single-minded prophets. With the prophets and not the priests, in the centuries between the wilderness and the Exile, lay the fate of the religion of Yahweh.

It was of the essence of Israel's faith that Yahweh was its one and only God. Yet the worship of Yahweh, throughout its whole progress, had to contend unceasingly against alien beliefs and practices.

Settled in Canaan, the people were unable to distinguish, except by name, the God known to their fathers from the local baals of the village communities. The contest between Yahweh and the native divinities of the soil continued in the countryside till the end.

The national worship, as it was constituted at the capital, was menaced in its turn, when the Hebrew kingdom opened to contacts with other nations. Solomon loved many foreign women. Though himself faithful to Israel's God, yet with a magnificent gesture, as suited a grand potentate, he built a shrine for Chemosh of Moab and for Milcom of Ammon; and so did he in the interest of all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. As these modes of worship, however, introduced for the immediate personal benefit of the royal wives, were limited in scope, probably their example was not of far-reaching influence.

With Ahab's queen, the Sidonian Jezebel, the case was different. A great temple erected at Samaria in honor of the Phœnician god, Baal-Melkart, imposingly a symbol and a challenge, brought to a public definite issue the contest between the apostates who acknowledged the power of alien gods and the champions of Yahweh, led by Elijah. The teaching of the prophet was given practical effect by the violent reforms of Jehu, who massacred all the priests, prophets, and worshippers of Baal. But the triumph of Yahweh was neither com-

plete nor final. A century later, Hosea still found the worship of the baals so prevalent in the northern kingdom as to require passionate denunciation.

The seductive forces which drew the people from their loyalty to Yahweh were too strong to be overcome entirely. As the worship of the baals allowed a greater abandon than the cult of the austere Yahweh, so the same allurements moved the Israelites to the acceptance of foreign deities. The relation had besides a political import; for the power that a nation wielded was the measure of the power of its gods. If Phœnicia was rich and Israel poor, if Assyria conquered the world and Israel succumbed, was not the good fortune of these nations due to the superior efficacy of their gods? So Israel might argue; and the way to apostasy opened ever invitingly.

When Samaria fell, the future of Yahweh was committed to the southern kingdom. Until now the temptations to foreign modes of worship had been less compelling in Judah than in the north. The meagre yield of its pasture lands, its comparative aloofness from other nations, the unbroken succession of David's line, the prestige of the Temple, offered fewer incitements to change and waywardness. For a brief moment, Queen Athaliah, daughter of the Phœnician Jezebel, established the cult of the Sidonian Baal in Jerusalem; but a revolution carried through by the Temple priesthood destroyed the alien queen and all her works. When Judah came into closer contact with Assyria, the example of the sovereign empire, no less than its military prowess, proved irresistible. The altar of Assyrian pattern which Ahaz caused to be erected at Jerusalem was probably but one instance of extensive innovations. When the king "made his son to pass through the fire," he gave royal sanction to an old and widespread custom. Child-sacrifice was prevalent among the Canaanites and Phœnicians; it had not been unknown in Israel. Now

it received new impetus and currency by the king's indulgence toward all manner of heathen rites. His passion for things Assyrian was especially intense. A willing vassal of the Empire, he was grateful for its help against his enemies Samaria and Damascus, and emulous to catch for his own small domain so much as a reflection of the glory of Ashur which held the world in awe. With the enthusiasm of a convert, Ahaz introduced the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, which figured impressively from of old in the religions of the East. In Judah, it was a novelty, and correspondingly enticing.

Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, proved more responsive to prophetic severities. As a notable rebuke to idolatry, which his father had so flagrantly quickened, he broke in pieces the brazen serpent in the Temple, indeed hallowed by traditions of Moses, but now an object of illicit worship on the part of a people whose God suffered no image to receive adoration due to himself alone.

Despite the prophets and well-intentioned kings, the recurrent tendency to license was not to be suppressed. And in the reign of Hezekiah's son Manasseh, it issued in a total abandonment to all evil practices. Jerusalem itself had been spared by the Assyrians, but Judah remained a vassal state. The star of the eastern empire blazed in the heavens; the dread of its cruel majesty was upon all the earth. Its vanquishing armies, ever on the march, were thrusting at the heart of Egypt. Mighty were the gods of Assyria. Such may have been the mood of Manasseh when he gave rein to the surging discontent of the nation. In reaction against the austerity of prophetic teaching, the king profaned the very Temple, raising there a pole and rearing altars for Baal and for the host of heaven. He made his son to pass through the fire. Like the Assyrians he practised augury and used enchantments; and like the ignorant peasants, he dealt

with them that had familiar spirits and with wizards. The regression was complete.

Unfaithful the Israelites may have been, but they were not faithless. On the contrary, religion, in one or another aspect of it, wholly dominated mind and emotion. All their activities whatsoever were impelled by energies or attended by consequences little understood but felt to be divine. Signally and in a measure that distinguished the Israelites from other peoples, religion was the essence and urge of their national culture, impregnating all their serious interests and irradiating their lighter hours with its gleam. Their life, limited in scale, narrow of outlook, was not highly colored nor complex, as was the life of the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Cretans, the Greeks. They had no splendid architecture, no colossal or refined sculpture, no drama, no craft to fashion beautiful things; out of their ritual unfolded no art. Such little magnificence as they attained in brief passage shone from the royal court at Jerusalem or Samaria, but hardly penetrated the smaller cities or outlying country. All colorful pomp of great occasions converged upon the sanctuaries and finally centred in the Temple ceremonial. The people's holidays were the holy days; their simple pleasures culminated in the joyousness of their religious festivals. Not lack of religion afflicted the Israelites, but rather excess of zeal, the while that their conception of deity and their modes of worship tended in wrong directions. Their experience in the large disclosed that religiousness may not be righteousness; ritual need not implicate morality.

People and priests alike missed the way.

But another current of thought and feeling ran deep, if not broad in Israel.

XVIII

THE FLOWER OF ISRAEL'S GENIUS

YAHWEH survived, gained majesty and dominion, won expanding moral character, and attained spirituality. The tribal God of the wilderness triumphed over the Canaanite baals, and became the national God of Israel. The Hebrew kingdom was rent apart: and the two small states went their feeble divided course to extinction and exile. While his people sank to ruin, Yahweh rose to ever new supremacy, as greater than all other gods, as finally the sole Ruler of the world.

The continuity was never wholly broken. From the beginning through the centuries, against all pressure of alien influences the religion founded by Moses maintained its germinal integrity. The oldest survivals of Hebrew literature, contemporary with events and genuinely historical, the Song of Deborah and the crystal narrative of David's career, hold the record of Israel's simple loyal faith in Yahweh.

The earliest legislation, the Book of the Covenant, compiled in the reign of Solomon from old material, clearly implied a recognition of God's will as moral. Yahweh's people should have pity on the poor and helpless, for Yahweh himself was pitiful; when the poor man cried unto him, he would hear, for he was gracious. The Israelite should protect and not oppress the stranger-sojourner; and he should show kindness even to an enemy. As judgment proceeded from Yahweh, who was just, so the administering of justice must be scrupulously pure; the witness should not testify falsely, nor the judge accept a bribe. These precepts were more than the compul-

sions imposed by mere custom. They were ordained by Yahweh; and he commanded them because he was merciful and righteous in his own nature. Since law was the formulation of God's will, so therefore the humane demands of pity and kindness, the requirement of rectitude, exacted by Israel's legislation, deriving from considerations of morality, were the expression of Yahweh's moral character. And thus early was conduct prompted and guided by religion.

The great narratives had for their inspiration and purpose to set forth the election of Israel to a mission dominantly religious. Preserving traces of elder beliefs, yet they interpret the traditions according to the ideas of their own times. Successively they reflect the enlarging conception of Yahweh's power and nature.

In the Judahite narrative, composed within a century after Solomon's reign, Yahweh appears as the maker of heaven and earth, the fashioner of vegetation, beasts and birds, and of mankind. He is not a force or object deified, like the gods of Egypt and Babylonia. He does indeed manifest himself in natural phenomena, but he is not identified with them; rather he is felt to be their creative cause. Personalized, for the mind could figure God only as a person, yet Yahweh is far exalted above men. Direfully just, but benevolent, ruler of the lives of men, he orders all their doings; and yet he talks with them in familiar wise. Other peoples in fear and blind awe bowed down to the likeness of their gods: reverently the Judahite narrator limns the immediacy of Israel's converse with Yahweh himself.

A century later the Ephraimite narrative shows a refinement of conception. Yahweh is now more remotely exalted. He reveals himself, not in his own person, but in dreams and visions; or he sends his angel-messengers: he works by supernatural means, less by human agency, and more by intervention from above. As to conduct, this

narrative evinces a more sensitive conscience. God has become more nearly spiritualized and more moral. So in its turn, despite the waywardness of the people and the materialism of the priests, the Ephraimite history maintains the continuity of the purer religion, and marks a stage of progress. It prepares the way for the coming of the great prophets; and in the period between the two narratives had appeared Elijah.

Abrupt, seemingly single, Elijah carried forward the true tradition, as he reaffirmed with terrific emphasis its basic maxims: Yahweh the sole God of Israel; Yahweh a God of justice. The question that he propounded with such dramatic vivid trenchancy, Baal or Yahweh, who is God? was answered decisively in a manner whose import the whole people could not mistake. Whatever its immediate consequences for Israel's practice, it served to define anew with intense clarity the distinctive relation of Yahweh to his people. Israel's God would suffer no other god by his side. Other gods might exist for their own peoples. But Israel's worship, due only to Yahweh, must be paid to him alone. With no less resounding finality, Elijah's rebuke of the king in the matter of Naboth's vineyard voiced the righteousness of Yahweh and denoted the requirements laid upon his worshippers by a God whose will was justice.

In the contest with alien deities, crucial for the future of the true religion, the cause of Yahweh received effective though violent impetus from the army captain Jehu. An adventurer pursuing his own ends, yet he was countenanced by Elijah's disciple, the prophet Elisha. Making himself king by the unconscionable slaughter of the whole royal family, Jehu thereupon exterminated all the adherents of Baal. The methods of the self-seeking zealot would seem to have been contrary to the will of a righteous God, even though the murderous acts were performed nominally in his service. According to

the narrative, he had the approval of Yahweh. It is significant of the progress of Israel's religion that a century later Hosea condemned the massacre. But for the moment at least, Jehu's political triumph restored Yahweh's primacy.

Salient from the turmoil of these perilous times, yet Elijah, Elisha, Jehu were not the only champions of Yahweh. To the elder prophet, appallingly alone in the cave at Horeb whither he had fled for his life from Jezebel's vengeance, Yahweh announced that after the destruction of his enemies by Jehu and Elisha, there should be left in Israel seven thousand faithful, all the knees that had not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that had not kissed him. Hidden from the queen's persecution during Ahab's reign were a hundred prophets of Yahweh. To Elisha rallied fifty of the sons of the prophets. And in eminent opposition to about four hundred popular prophets stood Micaiah, son of Imlah, who in pronouncing doom upon the king anticipated Amos.

Moreover, Jehu, as though to reënforce his enterprise and lend it sanction, coerced to his support the leader of the Rechabites. On his bloody way to Samaria, the rebel captain lighted on Jehonadab. "And he saluted him. . . . And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for Yahweh." Thus Jehonadab enters the narrative as a figure well known in Israel. It transpires that the Rechabites were an embodied protest against the popular loose worship. In their view, the ill plight of Yahweh was due to the evils attendant upon settled life in Canaan. Striving to remain true to the God of the fathers, they would build no houses, but dwelt in tents; they would not sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; and they would drink no wine. By their manner of living, they pleaded for a return to the faith of the good old days, when the Hebrews were wanderers in the

wilderness and worshipped Yahweh in all simplicity. Doubtless their example counted in maintaining, though precariously, the true tradition. After the overthrow of the northern kingdom, they dwelt in Judah; and more than a century later, when the armies of Nebuchadrezzar were threatening the country, they took refuge in Jerusalem. In that late day Jeremiah cited the Rechabites' fidelity to the precepts of their order as a rebuke to the fickleness of the people. They had played their part loyally, and not wholly without effect.

The religion of Yahweh was carried forward by individuals or little groups, apparently against the drift of people, priests, and kings. Surely the kings did not forswear their allegiance to Yahweh; but by their toleration of the deities of other peoples in political or cultural relations with Israel, they impaired his supreme majesty. And yet there was always some response to the higher teaching. The Judahite and the Ephraimite narrators could not have been altogether singular and apart from any current of feeling within the nation. They wrought creatively, indeed; but the material which they transmuted to splendor was already at hand. Their illumined piety must have caught some reflection of a glowing warmth of national emotion and eager faith. Likewise the doctrine of the prophets, themselves isolate and their words seeming to ring unheeded, was not suffered to perish utterly. Some hearers were concerned to preserve their addresses in written form to the use and profit of generations to come. Shortly after Amos and Hosea spoke in Israel, the northern kingdom was swept away. Descendants of the north Israelites were the Samaritans; and it is suggestive of the complete ruin of the state that the Samaritan scriptures do not include the books of Amos and Hosea. But when the nation was dispersed throughout the Assyrian empire and lost, at least a few of its citizens probably, as certainly did the Rechabites, fled into Judah and to

Jerusalem. Among them, it may be supposed, were the bearers of the two prophetic books. Perhaps they were priests, for these, as learned men, might have aided in committing the discourses to writing; and not all priests were necessarily antagonistic to prophecy, as witness the priest-prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. How numerous among all the people were the strictly loyal adherents of the true religion can only be surmised.

Therefore, wide and urgent as was wayward Israel's secular need of guidance, the nation had not entirely lacked counsellors by word or by example. And so in their turn, the great prophets were not quite a sudden, inexplicable apparition. It fell to them not to initiate but to enlarge, not to change in essence but to exalt and refine. They had not to prove, even for their errant people, the existence of Yahweh, but rather to declare, though in newly enhancing terms, what manner of God he was and what he required.

Yahweh was a God of revelation. Unlike other deities, creatures of their worshippers, Yahweh rose not into being in a form and vesture imagined of primordial mythology. Yahweh *was*, from the beginning, — self-created; he was cause. And from the beginning he revealed himself, by his own acts, in the happenings of men's lives, and by the mouth of his prophets. Though his people strayed from him, Yahweh was constant, and his revelation was continuous.

As cause of all things and self-revealing, Yahweh was a God of history. Israel was ever acutely conscious of its origins. The relationship between Yahweh and his people was not a relationship of nature, intrinsic, compelled by inevitable necessity, and immemorial. By his own free act Yahweh chose Israel at a single historic moment. And Israel's fortunes were the varied record of Yahweh's dispensation.

So much was Israel's common cherished belief down the centuries.

In the life of the nation, the continuing being of Yahweh, who ceaselessly revealed himself, was realized historically, — so far as concerned Israel. Then the great prophets took a step beyond. Yahweh was ruler not only of Israel but of all peoples. As he brought Israel out of Egypt, so he also brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir. As he would punish Israel, so too would he punish the Arameans, the Philistines, and Ammon and Moab. The teaching of Amos was extended by Isaiah. "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation!" Yahweh would stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians. He had stretched out his hand over the sea, he had shaken the kingdoms. All peoples were but instruments, which Yahweh used for his own designs. A century later Jeremiah was charged to speak to the peoples that sent messengers seeking alliance with Judah: "Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, I have made the earth, the men and the beasts that are upon the face of the earth; and I give it unto whom it seemeth right unto me." The God of Israel's history was the master of all history.

Since Yahweh, as a God of history, had existed continuously from out of the past and operated ever creatively, controllingly, in the present, so he had a future. And this, as the prophets came to see, was independent of the particular fortunes, whether good or bad, of his worshippers. The elevation of Yahweh to sovereignty over the whole earth relaxed the old exclusive national bond between him and his chosen people. It was the nation's deepest conviction, established at the beginning and intensified with the centuries, that Yahweh and Israel were linked indissolubly in a common fate: their dependence was reciprocal and equally conditioned. Every people had its god; and conversely, a god without a people was unthinkable. Now in crashing sentences of doom, Amos announced that Yahweh would

even destroy his own very people. Though indeed chosen, Israel was but one among the nations. "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Yahweh." Yahweh did not need Israel, — a bitter lesson, so subversive of old beliefs.

And in the swift course of material disasters, as the prophets rose to the conception of God increasingly as a moral and spiritual being, Yahweh was released from the constraints of the covenant binding him to Israel, and thus he was enabled to survive, as no other god survived, the destruction of his nation. The fortunes of other national gods marched with the fortunes of their people. They waxed with their worshippers' increment of might, and waned with their decline. The gods gained worldly majesty by territorial conquest. Not so Yahweh. Other nations, more powerful in numbers and in arms, subjugated puny Israel. But Yahweh triumphed over their gods, and lived on after these had perished. The problem thrust upon the prophets was this: If Israel is weaker than other nations, how can Yahweh be greater than their gods? The problem was forced by the pressure of outer circumstances; the more urgent it became, the nearer and more terribly ruin impended, so much the stronger became the prophets' reasonable faith. The solution lay elsewhere than in the physical. Yahweh's relation to his people was different from that of other gods to their worshippers. He was superior to them in essence and in character. His power was not in trampling legions and the holocausts of innumerable suppliants. He was supreme in righteousness; and his moral law, imperative not only upon Israel but upon the whole earth, must prevail over all material might. Indeed, the very overthrow of his nation was a triumph of his justice. Not by world conquest, but by virtue of his own nature, Yahweh attained highest elevation and broadest sovereignty.

Though the prophets conceived Yahweh thus greatly, they still

clung with passionate intensity to the old thought of him as in a special and wonderful sense the God of Israel, but they filled the thought with new content and charged it with richer implications. By Amos, indeed, the bond between Yahweh and Israel was transmuted. It was not, as the people believed, physical nor sacrosanct and inviolable: it would be loosed in punishment of the nation's sins; it could only be maintained by Israel's deserving. Micah's view was limited: though Yahweh came down to tread upon the high places of the earth, he was concerned solely for his own people; but yet the prophet announced boldly that Jerusalem should be destroyed. For Hosea, the bond was peculiarly close: in establishing and maintaining it, Yahweh was actuated by love; and he required an equal love in return. With Isaiah and Jeremiah, in more exalted and more intimate wise, Yahweh was the God of Israel: but neither stopped just there. For Isaiah, the national God, exceeding effulgent in glory, supreme in majesty, was Israel's *Holy One*. Notwithstanding this concept, superlative in exaltation and refinement, Isaiah proclaimed that although Judah were overwhelmed, Jerusalem would remain inviolate as Yahweh's dwelling place. There followed a protracted reign of apostasy and utter license. Yet with no prophet was Yahweh closer to his worshippers than with Jeremiah. But he announced that the very Temple itself should be destroyed. For Yahweh was no longer bound to his people, his land, his city. Yahweh was God in a sense sublimer and more spiritual. In the measure that the prophets transcended the traditional particularistic idea of Yahweh's relation to Israel, they made it possible for the national God to become universal.

Most broadly basic in the appeal of the prophets was their reference to Yahweh's righteousness.

In origin, morality is but custom. It is religious in content only to the extent that all life is implicated with forces beyond human. Morality is communal sanction, and that sanction stands under the approval and protection of the god. Right and wrong, virtue and sin, are collective; they are that which is helpful or injurious to the group. Primitive morality does not reckon with the personal character or inner motives of the individual; it is concerned only with overt acts.

Israel's teachers lifted morality to another level. Not custom, as of old, not the compulsions by the group for its own safeguarding, morality was determined by the requirements of God. Wrong and sin were the breach and default of Yahweh's commands; right and virtue followed upon obedience to his will.

The prophets achieved their conviction of Yahweh's righteousness not wholly by direct inspiration; they were forced to it by reasoning, as they sought to interpret their world. Israel had no belief in the continuance of life beyond the grave. At death, the soul went down, feeble, shadowy, into Sheol, a vague region of darkness underground, without distinction of estate, without penalty or reward, a place of complete deprivation. Utterly to be deplored was the cessation of life, the end of man. The individual had no future. Only for Israel as a people was there a future, and it was of this earth: hence the expectation of the Day of Yahweh; hence, as the nation plunged to destruction, the eager longing for the Messiah, a glorious king of David's line who should rule on earth in power and perfectness. Therefore life of the present must be explained in its own terms. A moment may be interpreted only by its relation to something outside itself. For explanation of the world as Israel knew it, a world of inequalities and iniquities, of impending ruin of the state, the great prophets made reference to Yahweh and his purposes. Assuming

the existence of God absolutely, as a fact not questioned, they sought in him and only in him the necessary conditions of human life. Yahweh was, must be, a God of justice, of righteousness. Therefore the miseries here and now were his punishment of the nation's sins. Let the people return to Yahweh understandingly. Salvation of the present in the present rested with God.

Not only exalted in righteousness, Yahweh was also of finer essence than other gods. Always and to the end, other nations imagined their gods humanly, and as physical power. So Israel too at first. Then as Yahweh was enhanced in moral character, Israel's concept of God tended to become spiritualized. Though the Hebrew people never attained the idea of complete immateriality, yet in the progress of Israel's thought, God became less material, less merely human, and more etherealized, divine more purely.

In the old days, the "spirit," or breath, of Yahweh was believed to be a bodily force. It came mightily upon Gideon, Jephthah, Samson. The ecstatics were seized by it. Upon Saul it came mightily, inspiring him to prophesy, quickening him to an impetuous deed; later, the spirit of Yahweh departed from him, and an evil spirit from Yahweh troubled him. Illustrative of the physical nature of such a spirit is the instance cited by the prophet Micaiah to King Ahab before the battle. A vision showed him Yahweh sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him.

> And Yahweh said, Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? . . . And there came forth a spirit, and stood before Yahweh, and said, I will entice him. And Yahweh said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, Yahweh hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets.

Not by this way was Yahweh conceived spiritually.

In refining the conception of Yahweh as a spiritual being, the prophets drew a practical lesson from Israel's attitude toward the use of images in worship. All other nations represented their gods in material forms. Israel followed a different course. In the desert, it may be fancied, there was no need of images: the object of worship was itself there; the moving moon, a solitary tree, a great stone, a precious spring of water, these were the abode of deity or the deity's very self. Besides, the wanderers lacked skill and implements to fashion substances at hand into shapes of meaning.

To the Hebrews, Yahweh might indeed be manifested in things: he revealed himself in fire and cloud and earthquake; as they pressed forward to the conquest of the promised land, a sacred chest certified the presence of the God of battles with his army. Here phenomenon or object was but a manifestation of the divine; it was not Yahweh himself nor an image of him. And Israel never personified the processes of nature. Yahweh was not thing; he was cause. To the extent that he showed himself to men in sensible form, his presence was designated as his "face" or his "glory." His being was his "name." These phases are more abstract, less material, than an image of stone, wood, metal.

In Canaan the newcomers took possession of the ancient shrines, which were furnished with objects bodying forth the immediateness of the deity to his worshippers. But the practices associated with the shrines led Israel astray, so that the people, though unwittingly, forsook Yahweh to bow before the baals. These modes of worship, however, were regarded as legitimate, for the people still supposed themselves loyal to Yahweh; they did not yet know his true nature. Even Elijah, in his victorious assault upon the Phœnician Baal, spoke no word condemning images.

It was the great prophets who first realized that the objects taken

over from Canaanite usage were accessory to the worship of false gods. Hosea scornfully exposed the popular delusions. "He hath cast off thy calf [contemptuously for bull], O Samaria; mine anger is kindled against them." Isaiah charged, as one count in his indictment, that the land was full of idols; and conformably with his teaching, King Hezekiah broke in pieces the brazen serpent in the Temple. Expressive of the prophetic doctrine, the Ten Words enjoined: "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them." Most sweeping polemic against idolatrous worship was launched in ordinances of the Book of the Law. Israel must break down the altars of the Canaanites, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire, and hew down the graven images of their gods.

It may be doubted if the objects used in worship were intended or believed to be a likeness of Yahweh's form. Israel had little plastic cunning, and probably at best its images were clumsily wrought or rudely carved. The pillar and the post, set up at the shrines, embodied the divinity that from of old was felt to inhere in stones and trees. The teraphim may have been images, large or small, of household gods, particular with each family. The bulls adored in the northern kingdom symbolized strength and procreative power, attributes which, originally imputed to Canaanite deities, were ascribed to mighty and bounteous Yahweh: they need not have been mistaken for Yahweh himself, since an object employed as a symbol is not necessarily a representative likeness, but may be merely the visible expression of an idea. Of the brazen serpent in the Temple, the origin, history, and significance are altogether obscure. The *Pesel*, or graven image, such as the Ten Words forbade, may or may not have been

of human form. Yet with the widest construction of these uncertainties, Israel had nothing at all comparable with the Egyptian and Babylonian elaborate effigies of the gods. The prophets denounced the use of images in Israel because they were associated with the worship of other deities and hence false to Yahweh; moreover, the God of Israel, as the prophets apprehended him, was too sublime to be degraded to material representation.

Conceived with ever rarer refinement as a spiritual being, still Yahweh remained transcendent, external. In other religions, the gods who were personifications of nature powers were immanent in things. In Israel's religion there was never latent the drift toward pantheism. Lifted above nature, Yahweh was outside the world that he had made. Those who won closest access gained direct communion with him, but they experienced no mystical union. The ecstasy of the enthusiasts was physical and psychic rather than religious. The great prophets saw Yahweh in visions, they spoke with him and heard his voice, they felt themselves possessed and compelled by his spirit as by a force: "Yahweh spake thus to me with a strong hand." They were his instruments. But there was no sense of identity and fusion, no merging and release of distinctive personality; the spokesmen of Yahweh rested apart as individuals. For them, knowledge of God was not indeed a speculative or intellectual notion of his essence, nor yet was it the absorption of the separate self in the supreme Being or absolute Self of the universe: knowledge of God was the practical understanding of his will; hence the prophetic emphasis upon conduct. God was outside of man, controlling his welfare from beyond, imposing requirements upon him from above. The prophets of Israel did not reach the ultimate spiritualizing of divinity. But of a God who remained transcendent, they won, among contemporary peoples, the noblest conception.

The religion of Israel differed from the religions of other peoples notably in two respects; and these were differences not so much of degree as of kind: the differences consisted in the character of Israel's God and in the order of demand that Yahweh laid upon his worshippers.

All nations conceived their gods as power, though its exercise were capricious, subject to no control. Likewise the prophets of Israel endowed Yahweh with plenary might. So Amos taught that Yahweh caused it to rain upon one city, and he caused it not to rain upon another city. He sent pestilence and war, and overthrew cities, "Shall evil befall a city, and Yahweh hath not done it!" Universal Cause, his power as ruler of nature and sovereign Lord of men ranged from heaven to the underworld of the dead, from the mountain top to the bottom of the sea. For Isaiah, earth's peoples were servant to Yahweh's hand. And to Jeremiah he committed the cup of the wine of wrath, to cause all the nations to drink it. But not only was Yahweh power; also — and herein was he greater than other gods — he was purpose. "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." Thus Isaiah brought into certain definition the idea of Providence, God's wisdom and might overruling.

Radiant of his power was Yahweh's dreadful majesty. The whole earth was full of his glory. So overwhelming and cataclysmic was his being that men should go into the caves of the rock and into the holes of the dust from before the terror of Yahweh and from the glory of his majesty, when he arose to shake mightily the earth. But more dreadful even than Yahweh's majesty was his holiness. To Isaiah at the moment of his call, Yahweh revealed himself as thrice holy, and in a new sense. Other gods, and Yahweh too at times in the early days, might not be approached without due pre-

caution, on pain of disaster to the heedless one; their holiness, inherent in their divinity, was but physical. Now Yahweh was awesome, terrific, because of his moral and spiritual sublimity. And the apostrophe of Habakkuk drew upon this higher implication of holiness.

> Art thou not from of old, O Yahweh my God, my Holy One!
> Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil,
> And that canst not look on perverseness.

The greatness of Yahweh, however, — his governance of nature, his authority over the nations — was less distinctive than the qualities attributed to his character. Every people imputed the maximum of power to its chief god; and he was himself, or there was ranged with him, a god who watched over justice. Amen-Ra, Marduk, Ashur were superlative might; Osiris, Shamash were guardians of law. But no other nation than Israel heard the divine voice, saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Only Israel endued God — as himself their source — with righteousness, which was more than sheer justice, with loving-kindness, and with tender mercy.

As a God of justice, Yahweh was indeed stern, avenging; but he was not inexorable. He would pity and pardon. Though men's sins were as scarlet, they should be white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool. Sublimely exalted in holiness, yet Yahweh was very near his worshippers. Other gods were the begetters of their people. Yahweh was a faithful husband; a compassionate, wistful father, not merely in the traditional physical sense. The relationship was charged with emotion. Other gods were aloof, severe, immobile. Yahweh came down with pleading. His heart yearned for his dear son, he would surely have mercy upon him. "Ye shall call me, my Father, and shall not turn away from following me."

In theory Israel's sole God from the beginning, Yahweh became actually unique by virtue of his character. His relation to other gods had to be determined with the centuries. Whether Israel before the Exile reached the concept of Yahweh as supreme and universal to the complete negation of all other gods is less significant than the fact that its great teachers proclaimed Yahweh as sole and unique even for Israel, with new emphasis and cumulative content. Of the primary dogma the practical consequences were wide. The exclusive worship of Yahweh gave Israel from the first its cohesion as a people; and to the particularity of its religion was due this people's constant sense of difference, which grew ever more intolerant. Conversely, infidelity to Yahweh was treason against the nation, for it involved Israel's unfaithfulness to itself. Moreover the oneness of Yahweh saved Israel's religion from becoming lost in syncretism. For though this religion was exclusive by intention, it was not isolated in fact. It absorbed many elements of Canaanite lore and practice; and enlarged by them, it proceeded still integral: further, it was intensified by its very contrast and opposition to all other ideas of deity and modes of worship. At last the sovereignty of Yahweh over all the nations, his sublimity as a moral being, his superlative spiritual holiness left no room for other gods.

With a finality not attained by contemporary nations, Israel arrived at the notion of God, the sum of everything divine, as distinct from a god, designated by a proper name. Other peoples had gods, many, various, of divers qualities and powers, and of differing rank, leading up to a chief god. The outlines were vague: one god passed into another; qualities and powers were shared in common. Yahweh was supreme, gathering all attributes of divinity to himself alone; he was unique, permitting no other gods by his side. The God of Israel was Yahweh. But Yahweh was God.

Perhaps the prophets themselves were not aware of the full import of their teaching. In their own time they gave new meanings to old terms: holiness, formerly a physical property of deity, rose into moral sublimity; communal right, the justice required by custom, was transmuted to righteousness, inspired by high motives and springing from a pure self-directed will. The content of prophetic terms and teaching was limited to the range of the prophets' insight, to the scope of their religious experience. These were far in advance of Israel's own attainment up to their time; they were immeasurably beyond the attainment, then or later, of other nations within Israel's horizon. But even they had still a future. The heights reached by the religion of the pre-exilic prophets are not its only title to distinction: equally significant was its capability of enrichment and sublimation. In the thought of the same Hebrew people, after the ruin of the state, Yahweh, God of Israel, became God supernal and universal. True to the great germinal urge in the heart of it, the teaching of the prophets flowered supremely in the religion of Jesus.

To bring the nation to a right understanding of Yahweh, it was not enough to declare his nature absolutely. Apprehending the complementary aspect of religion, the prophets set forth the demands of Yahweh upon his worshippers.

In primitive society, the group accepted the cultus without question: it was given; it was there, immemorially. The worshippers quite simply tried to perform with mechanical correctness the acts imposed by the ritual. The prophets of Israel interpreted religion far differently. According to their doctrine, religion was conscious eager conformity with Yahweh's moral will.

A moral God was not satisfied with sacrifices and offerings. By nature, Yahweh was not a being to be swayed by the base appeal of

material gifts. He demanded right conduct. To sin, to miss the mark, was not, as the people supposed, to commit an error in ritual performance: to sin was to offend against Yahweh's ethical law. As the prophets thus freed religion from the external and the material, they released emotion and the spirit.

The prophets' reiterated condemnation of ritual reveals its immense importance in the national worship. Unable to propose a practical substitute for it, they sought to transform its motive. Beyond the stark denial of its efficacy, they affirmed with devastating scorn that sacrifice was positively odious, lacking the right intent. Sweeping away the familiar, cherished, mechanical supports of religion, Israel's teachers averred the possibility, nay more the necessity, of choice between two kinds of act, — the one righteous, the other iniquitous. Not outer action but inner motive was decisive. No longer would gifts purchase Yahweh's favor; nor would the mediation of priests bring men to a knowledge of what his character demanded. Of pleasing God truly the responsibility devolved upon the individual, as capable of choice.

Here emerged the individual as a religious person. In elder days, the individual had no status apart from his group. Virtue and sin were collective. The merits or misdeeds of one returned upon all, upon the whole family or the clan. To requite Obed-edom for his wardship of the Ark, Yahweh blessed him together with all his house. Examples of punishment entailed were the penalties visited upon the families of Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16 31, 32) and of Achan (Jos. 7 24f.), and upon the sons and grandsons of Saul (2 Sam. 21 1–9). The principle was expressed for Israel in the saying, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Toward the end, it was proclaimed, in the Book of the Law, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the

children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Meanwhile the prophets had won a new conception of responsibility. In the main they addressed the whole people as a unit. But they also noted differences of lot or station, the widow, the fatherless, the oppressed, the poor. As the nation crumbled in violent dissolution, there issued from the general ruin a perception of the meaning and worth of the individual. Isaiah discerned the possibility of a remnant which should return. Emphasis was transferred from the whole to the one. At last the individual stood solely forth as in and of himself liable toward God. Religion was charged with profounder obligation.

Right worship was glad obedience prompted by enlightened will. Defining thus the true nature of religion, the prophets declared the need of repentance, — a new understanding, a change of intention, a different heart. In their own experience, which they made typical of all right approach to God, they were sorely aware of sin. So Isaiah realized in himself the mordant sense of unworthiness and consequent separation from God. When Yahweh appeared flamingly, to summon him to his mission, the prophet cried out in anguish, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips." Poignantly Jeremiah too felt the personal bitterness of sin, the wounding of God's love, the grievous pain of one's own consciousness. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?"

Sin was the result of heedless ignorance. Hence the necessity to know God. To Hosea came the word of Yahweh, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." And athwart the yearnings of his tenderness smote the clear truth, "I desire goodness and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." When

Isaiah confessed before Yahweh the uncleanness of his people, searingly terrific was Yahweh's reply: "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed." To worship Yahweh aright, Israel must know him aright, must approach him with an understanding heart.

And Yahweh demanded also faith, deeper and truer than of yore. In the old days there was no question of simple trust in Yahweh, his might, his rule, his benevolence toward his people. Deborah had but to sound the call to battle in his name. And David, representative of all his fellows, wholly committed his life to Yahweh's direction. The piety that breathed in the great narratives was as complete as it was single. With anxious pathos Hosea affirmed for the first time explicitly the inwardness of the religious temper. Isaiah developed the theme at length, with appeal to practical reason. The worshippers of Yahweh were not lacking in belief and trust: but their belief was blind and mistaken; they trusted in the wrong things. They believed that Yahweh was bound to protect his own people, and that they could gain his favor by petitions and sacrifices. But Yahweh hated their oblations of vanity; it was but lip service, traditional and perfunctory. "This people draw nigh, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men, which hath been learned." But even their accepted teachers and their professional wise men had not the truth. "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." On the contrary, "O house of Jacob," pleaded Isaiah, "come and let us walk in the light of Yahweh!" The people trusted in material

forces, in their silver and gold, in their own strength, in alliances with other nations, in armies. Vainly. For the Egyptians were men and not God, and their horses were flesh and not spirit. "Woe to the rebellious children," saith Yahweh, "that take counsel but not of me; and that make a league, but not of my spirit!" Not by supernatural foresight was Isaiah empowered to herald the certain future, but by the assurance of his own knowledge of Yahweh and faith in him.

The faith urged and exemplified by Isaiah was absolute. Another kind of faith, but no less religious, was achieved by Habakkuk. Not by conviction and affirmation, but by questionings, was he able to discern and to declare the manner of divine purposes. Scanningly he had thought much about God. As he questioned and watched, at length Yahweh answered him. Though the vision tarried, he should wait for it. Its time was appointed, it would surely come, it would not delay. Though God's providence were mysterious, he could be trusted to effect his designs. In the midst of iniquities, turmoils, and confusion of values, the righteous should live by his steadfastness. So Habakkuk represented a point of view different from that of his fellow prophets, but one perhaps not unknown in those dark days. Faith was not granted him by illumination or immediate experience of God. He had to win it by the bitter toilsome way of doubt. To such as would be loyal to Yahweh, he counselled indomitable trust, fidelity, patience, duteous but joyous acceptance of God's will. Herein he attained even a deeper understanding of the true religious attitude.

In its primary manifestations, religion arises out of fear and self-interest: the gods are power, patron, king, remote but imminently terrible; their power must be propitiated, their indulgent bounty purchased. Israel's prophets taught that religion should spring from love. Yahweh chose Israel to be his first-born, his specially favored,

son, because he loved him. Israel had no female divinity. All tender sentiment, of which this people was greatly capable, was concentrated in passionate devotion to the sole God. Yahweh was Israel's husband; with a change of metaphor, but keeping the fervor and urge of intense affection, he was Israel's father. Worship other than the true worship was conjugal infidelity and filial ingratitude. Therefore the obligations implicated in the relationship were moral. Moreover, appeal was made to the deeper and nobler motives, lifted out of fear and self-regarding intent, and directed to the conscience and the heart. The prophets enjoined love of goodness for its own sake, and because goodness was Yahweh's will. They pleaded for love of God, because he was loving, and the highest, worthiest tribute man could render him was love.

Other nations paid homage to their deities, who accepted men's offerings and in return bestowed material benefits. Yahweh was to be worshipped best and truly by the doing of his will. But not only was he to receive worship as the object of devotion; Jeremiah taught that Yahweh was himself the source and inspiration of religion. In offering sacrifice to other gods, the people of Judah had but hewn out broken cisterns that would hold no water; their homage was vain. Yahweh was more than mere recipient: he was a fountain of living waters, quickening and sustaining man's spirit in his intercourse with God.

Not mechanical, inevitable, as with other gods, the relation between Yahweh and his worshippers was voluntary and intimately personal. Hosea had felt profoundly the need of a different heart and the compulsions of love. Notably for Jeremiah religion was communion. Other prophets uttered the revelation of Yahweh it was given them to speak. Jeremiah talked with Yahweh, as a man talks with his friend. Other prophets, as instruments of the divine mes-

sage, had addressed the people as a whole: for the relationship between Yahweh and Israel was corporate; it was tribal, national. Yet appeal to the nation as a unit had failed. There was left the individual. Jeremiah, by nature self-conscious, sensitive, felt his commission by Yahweh to be personal to himself. When his labors aroused violent hostility that forced him into isolation keenly realized as loneliness, his total failure besides to win the people drove him back upon himself as an individual, and led him to question God on his own behalf. "Righteous art thou, O Yahweh, when I contend with thee; yet would I reason the cause with thee." So Jeremiah entered into a new relation with Yahweh, a single, separate soul seeking to know God, striving to learn his will anxiously, then ready to obey it.

In the affections Jeremiah found the way of approach to God. "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." The old covenant made with the fathers was indeed broken by Israel's secular infidelity. But Yahweh would make a new covenant: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it." Not formal worship surely, nor even mere right conduct, — religion welled from the heart. This was the prophet's understanding of his relation to God: "Thou, O Yahweh, knowest me; thou seest me, and triest my heart toward thee." This was the charge he brought against his people, that Yahweh was near in their mouth, but far from their heart. And this was Yahweh's supreme promise to Israel: "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Yahweh: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." The soul of man is come into lucid consciousness and recognition. Religion is the utter devotion of the individual heart to God.

A voice, nameless but ultimate, echoes the sum and issue of prophetic teaching:

"Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" [1]

When the nation was nearing its precipitate end, the efforts of the prophets to constrain the people to the right path were suddenly and signally reënforced. Soon after the young Jeremiah was called to his task, and while Zephaniah's wrathful threatenings still resounded, there was discovered in the Temple the "Book of the Law." Composed probably within the reign of Manasseh, it was inspired by the teachings of the prophets of the century before, though their labors seemed, in the excesses of apostasy that supervened upon the deliverance of Jerusalem, to have been frustrate; many-faceted, it mirrors the conditions, the beliefs and aspirations of its time. With a continuity that bridged the depths into which the people plunged wantonly, the Book of the Law, while it was concerned practically with the regulation of the cultus, was in aim penetrated by zeal for worship in the true spirit.

The people had been seduced by usages associated with the old Canaanite local shrines and hillside altars. To demolish at one stroke the whole basis of these allurements to evil, the Book of the Law ordained that legitimate sacrifice must be offered only at the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem. Consequent upon this decree were changes of detail in praxis, which fell within the purview of the

[1] Ascribed to Micah, 6 6-8.

priesthood. But from out the disposition of external forms, as the reason for it, mounted to heightened splendor the prophetic doctrine of the nature of God.

Yahweh had *chosen* Israel, — here is the first use of the precise term, though the idea was old — not for any merit on Israel's part, but from the wealth of his own love. Therefore in grateful response to his wondrous guidance and care, intended to the discipline and betterment of his people, they should keep his statutes, less from fear of punishment than from love to Yahweh and the desire to please him, as a God who was grieved by their disobedience and wounded by their iniquity. Reference was indeed made to self-regarding motives: Israel should not go after other gods, "lest the anger of Yahweh thy God be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee from off the face of the earth": and if Israel would keep his commandments, "he will bless thee and multiply thee; he will also bless the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy ground, thy grain and thy new wine and thine oil, the increase of thy cattle and the young of thy flock." Such was the people's own view of their relation to their deity, the notion of due penalty or appropriate reward. And moreover, the extremity of the nation's sins required the utmost of coercion. The prevailing tenor of the book, however, was the extolment of love, and demand on the affections. In the same spirit, the laws governing conduct were prompted by humane considerations. God moved in kindness; obediently men should be kind in generous love.

Resuming the doctrines of its prophetic forerunners, but itself wrung from the agonies of its own apostate age, the Book of the Law expounded anew the nature of Yahweh. His attributes were reaffirmed with a fresh majesty of phrase. Yahweh was God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty and the terrible, who regarded not persons nor took rewards, executing judgment of the

fatherless and the widow, and loving the stranger-sojourner. He was a faithful God, who would observe the oath sworn to the fathers; he would keep covenant and mercy with them that loved him, but with equal justice would he repay them that hated him, to destroy them. A fearsome God, but loving as a father, inerrantly righteous but graciously merciful, Yahweh was exalted above all flesh. Unto him belonged heaven and the heaven of heavens, his holy habitation, and the earth with all that therein is.

Israel's infidelity and idolatry had been smitingly denounced by Hosea and Isaiah. Now the abandon of Manasseh's reign made imperative a new statement of Yahweh's all-exclusive uniqueness. Yahweh was one God, not many like the baals. Yahweh was Israel's only God. In elliptical terms capable of various renderings, all of which however reëmphasized the great lesson of complete singleness, it was proclaimed: "Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God is one Yahweh!" or, "Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone!" Only a God unique could become supreme, not merely as the sole ruler of his people exacting their whole allegiance, but also as the entirety of attributes that his worshippers could conceive. That these attributes reached the highest of moral grandeur and spiritual purity was the distinction of Israel's genius.

The truth of Yahweh's sole supremacy established, there followed immediately in the Book of the Law the practical injunction: "And thou shalt love Yahweh thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." Herein worship too attained the heights: — the necessity and the privilege to fear God reverently, to walk in all his ways, to serve him, and to love him with all the heart and soul.

At once a legal code and a great document in the religious experience, the Book of the Law pointed the way to the dual path pursued

by the Jewish community after the Exile: — the elaboration of a meticulous legalism and the eloquent supreme exaltation of Yahweh as God spiritual and universal.

Amazingly in the brief span of hardly six hundred years, Israel passed from the acceptance of a god whose habitation was a mountain in the wilderness, who manifested himself in storm and fire and earthquake, to the worship of God, throned in heaven, ruling all the earth, a God whose will was righteousness, whose being was love. The religions of other nations, when they emerge into historic cognizance, in the fifth millennium before Christ, were risen out of an obscurity of unreckonable antecedent time. Of Egypt, Sumer, Babylonia, and then Assyria, the religions had arrived at full maturity when the tribes who came into history as the Hebrews were still wanderers in the desert. Unrelated to the gods of contemporary nations, the God of Israel entered Canaan with his worshippers; there assailed and beset by alien deities and contrary modes of worship along a few critical centuries, Yahweh triumphed, for Israel unique, in Israel's world supreme. No other religion in the ancient East at all paralleled the religion of Israel in the rapidity of its unfoldment, or ripened to gleam and savor in any wise comparable with the glory of its flower and the sublime fulness of its fruit.

The religion won by Israel was indeed the achievement of great men. But these were the paramount exemplars and finest essence of their people. Ever characteristic of Israel was the salience of individuals, — distinguished not by royal birth or powerful place, but eminent by virtue of personality. In primitive society, the individual is subordinate to his family or clan. From the nations contemporary with Israel, the names remembered are those of kings and conquering generals. Very early, in Israel's retrospect, and through-

out the people's history, the course of events was traced by individuals. Not only princes, counsellors of state, and army commanders throng the agitated years, but also popular heroes, adventurers, men of God, adroit women, and persons of quite humble station. Luminously the authors of the great narratives, though unnamed, were regnant personalities. Surgent above all were the prophets, who declared the progressive revelation of Yahweh. But these men were themselves the product of their race. In them were embodied in their amplest measure and sovereign degree the qualities that distinguished Israel. Their work was conditioned by the nature of the people to whom they appealed. The religion they taught, proceeding from Israel's traditional beliefs, defined itself against the background of popular practices by contrast and release. Though in their zeal for righteousness and purity, they pictured the whole nation as corrupt, yet the fact that the true religion maintained itself is evidence that it evoked response. The material given the prophets' hand, the minds and wills of their people, was wayward and obdurate, yet of a mettle that enabled their achievement. Without their heritage of racial character, born in the desert, and wrought by pressure of circumstance to a quick, resilient temper, the prophets would not have been; without the effectual accord of a people capable of noble conduct and lofty ideals, they would have been but a voice. Their labors, if possible at all, had been in vain. Israel brought forth the prophets: the prophets led Israel to the heights.

The genius of Israel, single, intense, consummately religious, came to superlative expression in the men who sought to know God, that they might do his will. They found God in Yahweh, righteous, just but merciful, ready to punish but eager to pardon, exalted but tenderly loving, a mighty God but spiritual, God supreme and eternal.

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